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A Microhistory of Migrants
and Their Identifications in a Paris Tenement
(1882–1932)



PH.D. DISSERTATION IN HISTORY SUPERVISED BY PROF. R.P. TOMBS

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

Title:

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This dissertation offers a micro-analysis of migration from a social and a cultural perspective. It is premised on the conviction that the micro scale can be of great value to avoid, or at least control for, the perils of taking ethnic, national, racial or gender boundaries for granted. Recounted across four different chapters combining individual stories with quantitative analysis, the action of this thesis spans five decades of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and takes place in a Paris tenement building. Or, more precisely, in a disparate complex of constructions located just outside the capital, in the heart of the Plaine-Saint-Denis, a *banlieue* which from the 1870s became a magnet for working-class migrants of many origins, whether in France or abroad.

That crowded place, whose unity is as much a narrative device as an epistemological tactic, is itself at the core of the first chapter. Both the buildings, situated at Nos. 96-102 Avenue du Président-Wilson, and their demographic make-up, far from being mere micro-structural conditions, appear as fluid realities whose delineations depend not only upon the residents' perceptions, but also upon our analytical choices. The second chapter investigates the inhabitants' migrations, demonstrating that the salience of categories of difference depended partly on spatial movements. This also was partly determined by personal interactions, which are addressed in the third chapter, through a focus on the inhabitants' intricate, and ever-evolving, networks. When identifications based on origin were given relevance in the people's affinities, local and micro-regional solidarity was generally more operative than a broadly conceived ethnicity. As for antagonisms, they were often less contingent upon origin than upon other variables. Finally, the fourth chapter addresses the extent to which public institutions played a role in the construction of difference, and how in turn the buildings' inhabitants negotiated, co-defined, or altered the dynamics of national identification.

*To the memory of my mother,
Agnès Mathieu*

Cover illustration: background from original work by Robert Doisneau, “La Maison des locataires,” photomontage, 1962. Photos on the building, from top to bottom and from left to right: Anselme Isz (resident at No. 100 Av. de Paris, 1886–95), 1920s; Jean-Claude Verrecchia and his mother at No. 100, 1952; Maria Carmina Pirolli née Di Meo (Luigi Pirolli’s mother), 1940s; Laura Ponte née Bianchi (resident at No. 100, 1907–1950s) on the inner “balcony” at No. 100, 1940s–1950s; Ambrosio Luengo Marcos (resident at No. 96, 1920–31), 1937; screenshot from *Il Piccolo Vetraro*, film by Giorgio Capitani, 1955; Errica Merucci née Pirollo (resident at No. 100, 1920–1), 1945; Antonia González née Ruiz (resident at No. 96, 1923–39), 1950; Giovanni Puzzuoli (resident at No. 96, 1906–24), 1960s; Élie Mandagot (resident at No. 102, 1928–65) playing pool in his bar at No. 102, 1950s; Berthe Sommer née Engelmann (resident at No. 100, 1878–84, and at No. 96, 1884–1922), 1940s. For credits, see the reference list of figures.

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Summary

This dissertation offers a micro-analysis of migration from a social and a cultural perspective. It is premised on the conviction that the micro scale can be of great value to avoid, or at least control for, the perils of taking ethnic, national, racial or gender boundaries for granted. Recounted across four different chapters combining individual stories with quantitative analysis, the action of this thesis spans five decades of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and takes place in a Paris tenement building. Or, more precisely, in a disparate complex of constructions located just outside the capital, in the heart of the Plaine-Saint-Denis, a *banlieue* which from the 1870s became a magnet for working-class migrants of many origins, whether in France or abroad.

That crowded place, whose unity is as much a narrative device as an epistemological tactic, is itself at the core of the first chapter. Both the buildings, situated at Nos. 96-102 Avenue du Président-Wilson, and their demographic make-up, far from being mere micro-structural conditions, appear as fluid realities whose delineations depend not only upon the residents' perceptions, but also upon our analytical choices. The second chapter investigates the inhabitants' migrations, demonstrating that the salience of categories of difference depended partly on spatial movements. This also was partly determined by personal interactions, which are addressed in the third chapter, through a focus on the inhabitants' intricate, and ever-evolving, networks. When identifications based on origin were given relevance in people's affinities, local and micro-regional solidarity was generally more operative than a broadly conceived ethnicity. As for antagonisms, they were often less contingent upon origin than upon other variables. Finally, the fourth chapter addresses the extent to which public institutions played a role in the construction of difference, and how in turn the buildings' inhabitants negotiated, co-defined, or altered the dynamics of national identification.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACS	Archivio centrale dello Stato (Rome, Italy)	ASD	Archivio storico diplomatico (Rome, Italy)
AD	Archives départementales (France), followed by the department number (ex.: 93 for the Seine-Saint-Denis)	AVP	Archives de la Ville de Paris (Paris, France)
AGA	Archivo general de la Administración (Alcalá de Henares, Spain)	BMOSD	<i>Bulletin municipal officiel de la Ville de Saint-Denis</i> (Saint- Denis, France)
AHN	Archivo historico nacional (Madrid, Spain)	BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France (Paris, France)
AHP	Archivo historico provincial (Spain)	CDEE	Centro de Documentación de la Emigración española (Madrid, Spain)
ANOM	Archives nationales d’Outre-mer (Aix-en-Provence, France)	FNA	French national archives (Pierrefitte-sur-Seine and Paris, France)
APP	Archives of the Préfecture de police (Pré-Saint-Gervais, France)	JSD	<i>Le Journal de Saint-Denis</i>
AS	Archivio di Stato (Italy)	MA	Municipal archives
ASC	Archivio storico comunale (Italy)	SDMA	Saint-Denis municipal archives (Saint-Denis, France)
		SHD	Service historique de la Défense (Vincennes, France)

In the following pages, a few shortcuts are meant to make the reading easier. The French term “*cités*” shall refer to the tenement block at No. 96-102 Av. de Paris in its entirety. A “resident” without further precision shall designate an occupant of the *cités*. Addresses are frequently condensed into a simple civic number (“No. 98,” “No. 96”), when no ambiguity is possible. Lastly, some French expressions are marked with an asterisk (*); their definition can be found in the glossary at the end of this volume.

“Self- and other-identification are fundamentally situational and contextual.”

–Frederick Cooper, Rogers Brubaker

*“The microhistorical approach is meant to enrich
the social analysis, to make it more complex
by taking into account different, unexpected,
multiple, aspects of the collective experience.”*

–Jacques Revel

*“We should take George Perec’s Life: A User’s Manual seriously
by writing the monography of a building... the object of study
would consist in looking at the manner in which the occupants
of a building live together, in better understanding, in other words,
the coexistence. It would be the biography of a street number.”*

–Philippe Artières

*“There was a frosted sky light over the roofstair housing that
diffused a yellow glow at morning and a soft grey haze at afternoon.
After one climbed from the tumult of the street, climbed the lower,
shadowier stairs, a little tense, listening to toilets, entering this light was
like reaching a haven. There was a mild, relaxing hush about it,
a luminous silence, static and embalmed.”*

–Henry Roth

INTRODUCTION

This story is one of many stories.¹ Each of them singular, many interwoven, all with roots that go deep in the past and far-reaching consequences in the times that followed. Possible openings, therefore, are countless. Let us select one, by way of a pre-credit sequence, as it were. It is set in April 1869. That month, a few days and many miles apart from each other, four babies were born: Edmond Derhée, Ernest Poullain, Bernardo Greco, and Lucie Perrin.

Edmond's birthplace was called Raucourt, a small village of Lorraine. His father was a shepherd and strolling basket-maker, his mother a *journalière**.² Two years later, their village would be cut in half by the new Franco-German border.³ Simultaneously, little Ernest Poullain was starting his life in the 19th district of Paris, into a coachman's family. His parents, both from Normandy, had married just in time to make him a legitimate child.⁴ As for Bernardo Greco, he was also born into a newly formed family, but one of farm-labourers. His native house stood in the Fraioli section of Roccadarce, a small settlement in the hills overlooking Cassino, in southern Italy.⁵ Finally, the starting point of Lucie's life journey was the village of Passavant, in

¹ Quotes on page 13 are drawn from Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity,'" *Theory and Society*, Vol. 29 (2000), No. 1, 14; Philippe Artières, *Rêves d'histoire. Pour une histoire de l'ordinaire*, Paris: Gallimard, 2014 (2nd ed.), 101; Jacques Revel, "L'histoire au ras du sol," in Giovanni Levi, *Le Pouvoir au village: histoire d'un exorciste dans le Piémont du XVII^e siècle*, Paris: Gallimard, 1989, XIII; Henry Roth, *Call It Sleep*, New York (NY): Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991 (1st ed. 1934), 144. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

² AD54, 5 Mi 472/R 5, Sainte-Geneviève, marriages, 1863, No. 2, 28.03.1863; APP, CB 73.6, 1897/416, 23.03.1897.

³ *Andrees Allgemeiner Handatlas*, Bielefeld, Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing, 1896 (3rd ed.).

⁴ AVP, V4E2353, Paris 19th arr., 1869, marriages, No. 93, 9.02.1869.

⁵ FNA, BB/11/13376, 27779 x 30; ASC Rocca d'Arce, 1869, No. 36, birth, 15.04.1869.

Eastern France. The place was known for its century-old glassworks, where Lucie's father, originally from a village 40 miles further north, was employed as a carver.⁶

Little could these four families envision that they would later become neighbours at the same, unremarkable set of buildings in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, at 100 Avenue de Paris. To make their paths cross, it would take a number of changes, at various levels. First, in chronological order, the Franco-Prussian war, which drove many of Alsatians and Lorrainers east, including Edmond's family. Then, potent economic forces which made living conditions increasingly difficult in certain regions, be it in traditional industries or agriculture, coupled with the industrial boom of the Plaine-Saint-Denis from the 1870s. On that formerly barren swathe of land, industries would mushroom at a frantic pace, attracting a swelling manpower. Among those industries was M. Legras's glass factory. Edmond, Bernardo and Lucie's father would all be employed there for years. It is also for the sake, and perhaps on behalf, of that factory's management that Bernardo would end up "leasing" underage child workers in Italy, and smuggle them all the way to Saint-Denis.

Furthermore, the buildings where they would all reside in the Plaine would have to be erected. For now, the vast terrain where the houses would be put up was still mainly empty, although in a two-storey house looking onto the avenue, a woman renting out furnished rooms was already planning to expand her housing capacity.⁷

Most importantly, conscious decisions on the part of the four families would be necessary. Some, as the Derhées and Grecos, would leave agriculture for industrial jobs. In the Perrins' case, Lucie's father would hold on to his former occupation, only changing places. As far as the Poullains were concerned, they would not join the ranks

⁶ SDMA, E 252, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1887, No. 411, 28.12.1887; SDMA, 1 K 1/33-1 K 1/38, Electoral registers, 1888-1894, Lucien Perrin.

⁷ AMSD, 1G87, Contributions mobilières et patentes, 1869, av. de Paris 90 [old number for No. 100-102]. That woman was Louise Versigny (see chapter 1).

of factory workers, but instead cater, and provide lodging, to others. At least that last part would not need a major material change: in the late 1860s, the hotel-restaurant at No. 102 where the Poullains would eventually settle was already standing. Upon walking through the front door, one would have found a migrant owner, migrant clients, and a pool table –three features that were to remain constant for a full century.⁸

It is there, in that particular environment, that this research is anchored. Its action takes place between 1882 and 1932, and revolves around the residents of buildings located at 96, 98, 100 and 102 Avenue de Paris in Saint-Denis.

The place and time selection is not arbitrary. It results from one basic epistemological choice, namely to devise this research as a nonconformist experiment.⁹ Its main argument can be summed up as follows. The identifications of the particular people living there, most of whom happened to be migrants, were enacted and given sociocultural effectiveness by dynamics that were more fluid, more intersectional, and involved more agency than what is commonly described at the macro level.¹⁰

We claim that the way in which people viewed themselves and others in that specific context was for a large part dependent upon circumstances, personal or otherwise, insofar as those circumstances informed, and were in turn altered, by individual decisions. This is why here, we shall lay the emphasis upon contingent coexistence, rather than presumably natural separations. The aim is to deconstruct and historicise the forms of classification through which ordinary people differentiated

⁸ AMSD, 1G87, *doc. cit.*, No. 2438; SDMA, E 209, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1874, No. 776, 22.10.1874; *Le Petit Journal*, 8.12.1869.

⁹ See István M. Szigártó, “The Capacities of Microhistory,” in Vilmos Erős *et al.* (eds.), *Approaches to Historiography*, Debrecen, 2016, 195–6: “The results of microhistorical investigations... can finally change the outlook of macrohistory, might question old orthodoxies.”

¹⁰ On the “enactment” of difference, see William E. Cross *et al.*, “Identity Work: Enactment of Racial-Ethnic Identity in Everyday Life,” *Identity*, Vol. 17 (2017), No. 1, 1–12; on identification, intersectionality, and agency, see below, p. 24–30.

themselves from each other.¹¹ This work contends, in particular, that the explanatory value of ethnicity and nation, two of the usual concerns of migration history in its social and cultural expressions, should be scaled back to a more convincing historical position as boundary-making processes in competition with many others. Those two identification systems were neither inescapable, nor one-way mechanisms –no more, in fact, than other differentiation dynamics such as class or gender, with which their oscillations were always closely entangled.

As far as methodology is concerned, the point of this thesis is to show that the micro level makes it possible to understand differentiation dynamics with more subtlety, and more idiosyncratic thickness.¹² Tapping into the rich traditions of microhistory and migration history, this research shall also borrow ingredients from other disciplines, be it methods, from historical demography, sociology, ethnography, or concepts, such as interactionism, networks and boundaries. Such a diversity of theoretical resources is key to design a socio-historical framework in which the evolutions of the agents' self- and mutual identifications can be assessed on their own terms, through the *reenactment* of their thought processes, and the *refiguration* of their social situations.¹³

This research is also reflective of its times. Times, academically, marked by an aspiration to interdisciplinarity, combinations of qualitative and quantitative methods, multi-site and multi-source efforts. This influence is certainly visible in a project set on the edge between history, sociology and anthropology, mixing discourse and data

¹¹ Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, "De quelques formes primitives de classification: contribution à l'étude des représentations collectives" (1903), reproduced in Marcel Mauss, *Œuvres, t. II*. Paris: Minuit, 1974, 13–89.

¹² In that sense, it follows the intention of original microhistorians to study the social, as Jacques Revel puts it, "*comme un ensemble d'interrelations mouvantes à l'intérieur de configurations en constante adaptation*." ("L'histoire au ras du sol," in Giovanni Levi, *Le Pouvoir au village, op. cit.*, XII –"as a totality of changing inter-relations within configurations in constant readjustment").

¹³ On the term "reenactment," understood as an operation of cultural archeology, see Robin George Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, 282–302; on the power of narratives to "refigure" history, see Paul Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, Paris: Seuil, 1983-1985, vol. 3, 387.

analysis, and built on a material collected through dozens of archival visits and individual interviews.

But the present times are also ones, politically, in which migrations are routinely misunderstood, caricatured, and exploited for misguided purposes. Much too often, migrants are made responsible for the societies' woes –a very old trope, to be sure, but one that remains incredibly consequential. The challenges currently faced by most people who leave their society to join another one, and the misrepresentations surrounding those challenges, cannot be ignored. Not only does this topicality constitute –as it often does in migration history– the circumstantial incentive at the foundation of this project; it is also instrumental in stimulating much of its theoretical and methodological innovation. It is only fitting, then, that this narrative should be rooted in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, which for the past hundred and fifty years, has been a magnet for immigrants.¹⁴ As a vivid reminder of this continuity, in late 2016, more than 700 migrants from Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq and Afghanistan were dwelling in tents on the Avenue du Président-Wilson, right across from Nos. 96-100.¹⁵

The precise delineation of this research results from the observation of several areas where the academic scholarship could make progress. First, there is a need for innovative epistemological solutions in order to fend off crippling “sample selection biases”¹⁶ stemming from the enduring compartmentation of migration history. In spite of being united around common objects –“migratory movements and flows as well as immigrant populations and pluriethnic relations”¹⁷–, this academic field remains

¹⁴ Ahmed Krouchi, “Mutations économiques et insertion des communautés immigrées en banlieue nord de Paris: Aubervilliers et Saint-Denis,” doctoral diss. in geography, University of Paris IV, 2003, 21.

¹⁵ “À Saint-Denis, évacuation d’un camp de fortune,” *Le Monde*, 16.12.2016.

¹⁶ We borrow the expression from sociologists who have tried to limit the influence of non-random selection of their cohort on causal inferences. See Richard A. Berk, “An Introduction to Sample Selection Bias in Sociological Data,” *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 48 (1983), No. 3, 386–98.

¹⁷ Nancy L. Green, “L’histoire comparative et le champ des études migratoires,” *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations*, Vol. 45 (1990), No. 6, 1346, note 3.

largely divided into “distinct literatures, separated by regional, chronological and thematic boundaries.”¹⁸

Social and cultural boundaries in the historiography

Two main social boundaries are often taken for granted: one between migrants and the rest of society, and another between groups framed in ethnic terms.

The first segmentation partly endures to this day, treating separately society on the one side –perceived as an autochthonous, homogeneous community of natives– and the immigrants on the other. The intellectual premises that spurred the first, so-called “classical,” scientific approaches of migration, were directly inherited from social Darwinism and a positivist mystique of change. The immigrant was posited as a “marginal man” –women being secondary actors, at best– striving for emancipation and modernisation. Eventually, with more or less celerity depending on his talents and abilities, he was bound to escape his original backwardness.¹⁹ Integration was viewed as a linear, ameliorative process.²⁰ No matter how many bumps on the road, the immigrant would be “assimilated” sooner or later.²¹ Inspired by that early sociological

¹⁸ Jan Lucassen, Leo Lucassen, Patrick Manning, “Migration History: Multidisciplinary Approaches,” in *Id.* (eds.), *Migration History in World History: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Leiden, Boston (MA): Brill, 2010, 18.

¹⁹ See Robert E. Park, “Human Migration and the Marginal Man,” *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 33 (1928), No. 6, 881–93.

²⁰ This “classical” paradigm, as it was retrospectively branded in the 1960s, remains associated with the sociological movement known as the Chicago school of the 1910s-1920s. Its most prominent scholars were Robert Park, Louis Wirth, Ernest Burgess, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (see Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology: Institutionalization, Diversity, and the Rise of Sociological Research*, Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press, 1986; Stow Persons, *Ethnic Studies at Chicago, 1905-1945*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 1987; Jean-Michel Chapoulie, *La Tradition sociologique de Chicago, 1892-1961*, Paris: Seuil, 2001). This mostly urban, teleological sociology opened new avenues of research that remain useful to this day, in particular on the subjective mechanisms driving individual “adjustment,” documented in the intimacy of private documents (see William I. Thomas, Florian W. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. Monograph of an Immigrant Group*, Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press (Vol. I and II), Boston (MA): Badger (Vol. III, IV and V), 1918-1920).

²¹ Russell A. Kazal, “Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 100 (1995), No. 2, 437–71. The notion of

awareness, the so-called Turnerian historiography²² soon laid more accent on the migrant individual, albeit still viewed as a prototype.²³ Scholars started paying attention to the immigrants' interrelations in complex systems.²⁴ In those studies, remarkably, ethnicity became liable to evolving over time. Analytically though, migrants and society remained very much apart from each other.

Gaps between migrants and the rest of the social fabric were not bridged any better by French academia. With regard to immigration, what prevailed were legal commentaries of the existing laws and jurisprudence regulating the fate of "foreigners."²⁵ 1932 marked a first important turning point in the historiography, with George Mauco's dissertation on immigration. For all its impressive data, however, it was riddled with

assimilation endures in a version that makes room for the perpetuation of ethnic and racial difference: see Richard Alba, "Continuities in Assimilation," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 40 (2017), No. 9, 1430–37.

²² Also referred to as the Harvard school, these American historians of the interwar period, most of whom were of immigrant descent themselves, were primarily concerned with rural societies (contrary to the Chicago school, focused on the urban setting). They soon inclined to position immigration, in connection with Frederick J. Turner's notion of the Frontier, at the heart of the discourse on American exceptionalism. See Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., "The Significance of Immigration in American History," *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 26 (1921), 71–85 (a direct reference to F. J. Turner, "The Significance of Frontier in American History," address given in 1893 in Chicago, in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and Other Essays*, New Haven (CT): Yale University Press, 1999). Rudolph J. Vecoli re-appropriated the expression in 1996 in "The Significance of Immigration in the Formation of an American Identity," *The History Teacher*, Vol. 30 (1996), No. 1, 9–27.

²³ The best example of this is the positivist, universalistic quest for "laws" of immigration, the ones inferred by Marcus Lee Hansen being an effective, if simplistic, way of describing the stages of integration over generations (Marcus Lee Hansen, "The problem of the third-generation immigrant," in *Augustana Historical Society, Reports, 1937-1938, Committee on Documents, Committee on Membership*, 1938, 21–4). This thread of anthropological history has exerted a long-lasting appeal over migration scholars. See for instance Abdelmalek Sayad, "Les trois 'âges' de l'émigration algérienne en France," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 15 (June 1977), 59–79.

²⁴ See in particular Charles Horton Cooley, *Social Process*, New York (NY): Scribners, 1918, 28.

²⁵ As the nationality debate became central in the 1880s, the legal discourse largely overpowered any other approach to migrating populations. Only a handful of social scientists were interested in the so-called "*pénétration*" of foreigners into France. Legal scholars who published on the topic between the 1880s and the 1910s included Isidore Alauzet, Aimé Houzé de l'Aulnoit, Charles L'Ebraly, Charles Lescoeur, Gaston Cluzel, Alexis Martini, Gaston Dallier (see Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1992; Nancy L. Green, "L'immigration en France et aux États-Unis. Historiographie comparée," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 29 (Jan.-March 1991), 67–82).

naturalistic stereotypes of ethnicity.²⁶ An almost complete neglect by the Annales school then left migration studies to isolated demographers,²⁷ until Louis Chevalier, whose work remains largely useful to this day, single-handedly led the way to a slow burgeoning after the Second World War.²⁸

That long-standing inclination, in French-speaking literature, for the legal and institutional response to migration was rejuvenated by a new, dynamic generation of historians in the 1980s.²⁹ But once again, the analytical connection between the immigrants with the rest of the social world was not a chief concern of that socio-legal perspective, later updated by citizenship studies in the 1990s and 2000s.³⁰ These efforts perpetuated, albeit in a more complex and certainly rewarding fashion, the good old dichotomy.³¹ Projects with a social or cultural focus formed a barely visible minority.³²

²⁶ Georges Mauco, *Les Étrangers en France*, Paris: A. Colin, 1932.

²⁷ Stéphane Beaud, “Les démographes français et l’immigration (1918-1950): science sociale ou science politique?,” master’s thesis in sociology, EHESS-ENS, 1987.

²⁸ Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot: Immigration, Citizenship, and National Identity (Contradictions of Modernity)*, Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 22–9.

²⁹ Gérard Noiriel, *op. cit.*; Jean-Charles Bonnet, *Les Pouvoirs publics français et l’immigration dans l’entre-deux-guerres*, Lyon: Presses de l’Université de Lyon, 1976; Pierre Milza, *Français et Italiens à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Aux origines du rapprochement franco-italien de 1900-1902*, Rome: École française de Rome, 1981; Ralph Schor, *L’Opinion française et les étrangers, 1919-1939*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1985.

³⁰ On the socio-legal approach, see Dermot Feenan (ed.), *Exploring the “Socio-” of Socio-Legal Studies*, Basingstoke, New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Responsible for importing the notion of citizenship into migration history were scholars like Mae Ngai, Dorothee Schneider, Adam McKeown and Mary D. Lewis in the United States, and socio-historians like Alexis Spire, Pierre Piazza and Estelle d’Halluin in France.

³¹ Significantly, the monthly seminar on the social history of immigration, founded at the École normale supérieure by Gérard Noiriel in the early 1990s and handed over a few years later to Éric Guichard and Philippe Rygiel, focused clearly on State-produced categories of difference (see the edited volume resulting from the seminar: Philippe Rygiel (ed.), *Le Bon grain et l’ivraie. La sélection des migrants en Occident, 1880-1939*, Paris: Presses de l’ENS, 2004). On his side, Patrick Weil also helped frame the immigration narrative in a State-centred story (see *La France et ses étrangers. L’Aventure d’une politique de l’immigration, 1938-1991*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991; *Qu’est-ce qu’un Français? Histoire de la nationalité française depuis la Révolution*, Paris: Gallimard, 2002; *The Sovereign Citizen: Denaturalization and the Origins of the American Republic*, Philadelphia (PA): University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

³² The sociocultural history of migration had been pioneered in France by Nancy Green and Gérard Noiriel in the early 1980s. See Nancy L. Green, *Les Travailleurs immigrés juifs à la Belle Époque. Le “Pletzl” de Paris*: Paris: Fayard, 1984; Gérard Noiriel, *Longwy, Immigrés et prolétaires (1880-1980)*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1984.

It would take another while before the migrants' daily life, their cultural representations, the patterns and hiccups of their personal itineraries became mainstream subjects in the French historiography of migration. A book series launched by Pierre Milza and Émile Témime in the mid-1990s was certainly a milestone in that regard.³³

Chronologically, the second separation embraced by migration historiography is the one that runs among the migrants themselves, or more precisely, between groups of migrants divided along predefined ethnic lines. This started in the U.S. scholarship, when the saga of a typical figure of a poor, helpless character, radically altered by the crossing of the ocean, became gradually challenged after the Second World War.³⁴ Historians started to insist on other parameters: continuity rather than rupture; agency in the sense given by E. P. Thompson; and, most of all, ethnic networks maintained by people "transplanted" rather than "uprooted" from their previous lives.³⁵ Economics, and the "push and pull" factors described by quantitative studies, were certainly not a little instrumental in this paradigm shift. Yet at a lower level of analysis, it was the "migratory chains" which came to occupy the analytical stage like never before.³⁶

³³ Pierre Milza, Émile Témime, "Français d'ailleurs, peuple d'ici," 10 volume-series published by Autrement, with titles such as *Un Nanterre algérien, terre de bidonvilles* (Abdelmalek Sayad, 1995), *Le Nogent des Italiens* (Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, Pierre Milza, 1997), *Les Harkis, une mémoire enfouie* (Jean-Jacques Jordi, Mohand Hamoumou, 1999), *La Petite Espagne de la Plaine-Saint-Denis* (Natacha Lillo, 2004). By contrast, other promising titles in terms of investigations "from below" can be somewhat misleading, when the work's content has little to do with sociocultural history: see e.g. Riva Kastoryano, *Negotiating Identities: States and Immigrants in France and Germany*, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2002; Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century*, Durham (NC), London: Duke University Press, 2009.

³⁴ The most eloquent proponent of the migrant saga was Oscar Handlin, in *The Uprooted*, Boston (MA): Little, Brown and Company, 1973 (1st ed. 1952). Handlin's narrative cast a long shadow over many subsequent studies, in which immigrants were described as "torn from" their European villages and "cast into" the great metropolises, where they were gradually "shaped into new people" (in the words of Moses Rischin, *The Promised City, New York's Jews, 1870-1914*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1977 (1st ed. 1962), preface, xi).

³⁵ John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, Bloomington (IN): Indiana University Press, 1985.

³⁶ See Walter D. Kamphoefner, "'Entwurzelt' oder 'Verpflanzt'? Zur Bedeutung der Kettenwanderung für die Einwandererakkulturation in Amerika," in Klaus Bade (ed.), *Auswanderer – Wanderarbeiter – Gastarbeiter*, Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae, 1984, 329–49.

Family and ethnicity became the yardsticks of the immigrants' destinies, factors of both alienation and solidarity.³⁷

That "ethnic" turn and its attempts at puncturing the melting-pot model was the first truly international moment for migration studies.³⁸ The encyclopaedia of ethnic groups published at Harvard in 1980 was the unmistakable symbol of a need to make room for every group, every identity –an ideal to which French historiography would come to subscribe as well.³⁹ Juxtaposed in a table of contents or on a library shelf, it is the idiosyncrasies and historical singularities of every type of migrants, meaning every ethnic, national or religious group, which are still the focus of the most common historical works on immigration.

The best ethnic studies are of great interest to grasp the complexity of the migrants' social integration. And yet the relevance of the monographic framework is rarely questioned, thereby reinforcing an atomistic conception of ethnic groups. The Italians for Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard and Pierre Milza; the Germans for Mareike König; the Poles for Janine Ponty and Philippe Rygiel. Each ethnicity has its historians, its

³⁷ This paradigm shift owed much to innovative intellectual suggestions by pioneers like Frank Thistlethwaite and Rudolph Vecoli. The former made a major contribution to highlight how the transnational process of migration went beyond the mere rational choice of the immigrants. Vecoli's work, on the other hand, stressed both the agency of the immigrants in assimilation dynamics, and the specificity of each ethnic group's cultural and social structures. See Frank Thistlethwaite, "Migration from Europe Overseas in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *11th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Reports V*, Uppsala, 1960, 32–60, reproduced in Rudolph Vecoli, Suzanne M. Sinke (eds.), *A Century of European Migrations, 1830-1930*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 1991, 17–57; Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of The Uprooted," *The Journal of American History*, No. 51 (Dec. 1964), 404–17.

³⁸ The multiple ethnic studies written in the 1960s and 1970s in the context of the *New Social History* and characterised by the desire to "historicise ordinary people" and write history "from the bottom up," stood in deliberate opposition to the model of the melting pot. They criticised its main premise, namely the rapid disappearance of the ethno-cultural traits of the newcomers and their offspring. See Nathan Glazer, Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City*, Cambridge (MA): MIT Press, 1970, xcvi–xcviii; Michael Novak, *The Rise of Unmeltable Ethnics*, New York (NY): MacMillan, 1977; Paul E. Johnson, "Reflections: Looking Back at Social History," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 39 (2011), No. 2, 380.

³⁹ Compare Stephan Thernstrom, Ann Orlov et Oscar Handlin (eds.), *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1980 and Pascal Ory (ed.), *Dictionnaire des étrangers qui ont fait la France*, Paris: Robert Laffont, 2013.

journals, its academic positions. The community study model, “mirroring the ‘ethnic renaissance’ happening in the social world, is still alive and well.”⁴⁰ The result is a mosaic of side-by-side communities, endowed with a putative social independence which often strongly resembles ontological sealing.⁴¹ Many scholars presuppose, by construction, the existence of such bounded units, before even starting any epistemological reasoning.⁴² That, in turn, logically precludes any understanding of the contingent dynamics of ethnicisation and group construction.

It is true that a much-needed sensitivity to the epistemological relativity of groupness is visible in studies on intergroup contacts. Specialists of that topic have long held a strong interest for relations between social groups in general, and minority groups in particular, at least in social psychology, sociology and anthropology.⁴³ But as far as history is concerned, among the few studies containing analyses on several ethnic, national or racial groups, the majority have stayed shy of looking at the

⁴⁰ Nancy L. Green, *Repenser les migrations*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2002, 25. This analytical skew has not waned in recent years, despite a gentle decline of the number of books directly addressing the notion of ethnicity itself. A measure of that decrease can be found in the number of academic books that include “ethnic” or “ethnicity” in their title. The aggregated number of such books reviewed in the *Journal of American History*, the *American Journal of Sociology*, the *Annales H.S.S.*, and the *Revue européenne des migrations internationales*, was 57 in 1991–5; 50 in 1996–2000; 44 in 2001–5; 40 in 2006–10; and 14 in 2011–15.

⁴¹ Ethnicity can also be spatialised upfront, extending the presupposed homogeneity to an area, and taking for granted the existence of ethnic neighbourhoods. See e.g. Janine Ponty, *Polonais méconnus: histoire des travailleurs immigrés en France dans l’entre-deux-guerres*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1988; Sévan Ananian, *Alfortville et les Arméniens : l’intégration réciproque, 1920-1947*, Paris: Val-Arno, 1999. As for the term “mosaic,” it was popularised by Yves Lequin with *La Mosaïque France: histoire des étrangers et de l’immigration*, Paris: Larousse 1988.

⁴² For recent examples of this practice, see Vazeh Asgarov, “L’immigration des Azerbaïdjanais en France: histoire et perspectives,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Strasbourg, 2012; Muriel Cohen, “Des familles invisibles: politiques publiques et trajectoires résidentielles de l’immigration algérienne (1945-1985),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris I, 2013.

⁴³ For psychology, see Irving R. Stuart, “Minorities vs. Minorities: Cognitive, Affective, and Conative Components of Puerto Rican and Negro Acceptance and Rejection,” *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 59 (1963), 93–9. Sociology: Robert E. Park, Ernest W. Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press, 1921; Gunnar Myrdal, *The American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy*, New York (NY): Harper & Bros, 1944; Emerich K. Francis, *Interethnic Relations: Essay in Sociological Theory*, New York (NY): Elsevier Science, 1976. Anthropology: Melville J. Herskovits, *Les Bases de l’anthropologie culturelle*, Paris: François Maspero, 1967, 210–26.

interactions between those groups.⁴⁴ Only isolated historical works have displayed higher ambitions in that respect.⁴⁵ But they did not really address the issue of mutual identifications and intergroup perceptions.⁴⁶

Things started to change under the influence of the sociology of interethnic relations. In France, that field began to blossom in the 1970s, first with studies on colonialism and racism.⁴⁷ The respective and reciprocal perceptions of the coloniser and the colonised were the early focus of these new studies.⁴⁸ In the mid-1990s, this new interest resulted, in France, in the inception of an interdisciplinary research group at the CNRS under the promising appellation “International migrations and interethnic relations.” However, the group soon focused exclusively on relations between nationals and immigrants, incidentally reinforcing the afore-mentioned dichotomy between the two categories.⁴⁹ Neither the mutability and historicity of ethno-national

⁴⁴ For example, John Bodnar, Roger Simon, Michael P. Weber, *Lives of their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 1982.

⁴⁵ Rowland Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America, 1790-1950*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1953; Ewa Morawska, “A Replica of the ‘Old-Country’ Relationship in the Ethnic Niche: East European Jews and Gentiles in Small-Town Western Pennsylvania,” *American Jewish History*, No. 77 (Sept. 1987), 27–86; Steven J. Gold, *The Store in the Hood: A Century of Ethnic Business and Conflict*, Lanham (MD): Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. The pioneering works of Ronald Bayor, renewing the traditional, fixist approach of ethnicity that prevailed in political science, should also be mentioned. See in particular Ronald Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: the Irish, Germans, Jews and Italians of New York City, 1929-1941*, Baltimore (MD), London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. For an example, by contrast, of a static treatment of ethnicity in the matter of ethnic conflicts, see Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1985.

⁴⁶ In an interesting article on relations between minority groups, published in 1993, Ronald Bayor only has one sentence alluding to the issue of mutual perception between individuals and groups. Ronald Bayor, “Historical Encounters: Intergroup Relations in a ‘Nation of Nations’,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 530 (Nov. 1993), 14–27.

⁴⁷ Pierre-Jean Simon, *Pour une sociologie des relations interethniques et des minorités*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006. One of the main champions of interethnic sociology, the late Véronique de Rudder, presided over a very rich bibliographic database called RÉMISIS (accessible at <http://remisis.dsi.univ-paris-diderot.fr>).

⁴⁸ Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé*, Utrecht: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1966; see also Michael Hogg, “Intergroup relations,” in John Delamater (ed.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*, New York (NY): Kluwer Academic, Plenum Publishers, 2003, 479.

⁴⁹ The only counter-example that we have been able to find from those years is Nathalie Clavel, “Le sentiment d’appartenance des immigrés ex-Yougoslaves en France,” in Ida Simon-Barouh (ed.), *Dynamiques migratoires et rencontres ethniques. Actes des Journées universitaires d’automne, Rennes, 15-16-17 septembre 1997*, Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998, 259–64.

identifications, nor the interactions between migrant groups, were discussed in these efforts.

Similarly, the repeated pleas of the best migration historians, who had finally acknowledged, following Rudolph Vecoli's insistence on "ethnicisation,"⁵⁰ that ethnicity had to be approached as something fundamentally negotiable and relational, were mostly unheard.⁵¹ On neither side of the Atlantic did the balance shift, as some had wished, from relations between migrants and natives towards an "intermigrant" type of social studies.⁵² Besides, the research on ethnicity has displayed a tendency to obliterate differences between the migrants themselves within each ethnic group, preferring instead "multichrome mosaics of monochrome identity groups."⁵³ And while the pledge of a dynamic conception of ethnicity has become increasingly common in introductions, it remains challenging for historians to follow through in the study proper.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Rudolph J. Vecoli, "An Inter-Ethnic Perspective on American Immigration History," *Mid America*, Vol. 75 (1993), No. 2, 224. This major article is the published version of a contribution to a symposium held in Växjö, Sweden, in 1991, and is also reproduced in Ulf Beijbom (ed.), *Swedes in America: Intercultural and Interethnic Perspectives on Contemporary Research, A Report of the Symposium Swedes in America: New Perspectives*, Växjö: Swedish Emigrant Institute, 1993.

⁵¹ Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the USA," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 12 (1992), No. 1, 5 (first published in *Altretalia*, No. 3, Apr. 1990).

⁵² Nancy L. Green, *Repenser les migrations*, *op. cit.*, 34. Historical volumes addressing the interaction between minority groups of migrants remain scarce. A rare example is Philip J. Anderson, Dag Blanck (eds.), *Norwegians and Swedes in the United States: Friends and Neighbors*, St. Paul (MI): Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2012. Meanwhile, real progress has been made in social psychology on the cultural side of intergroup relations. In particular, the social importance of friendship as the most effective form of intergroup contact was substantiated by researchers like Tom Pettigrew. See Tom Pettigrew, "Generalized intergroup contact effects on prejudice," *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 23 (1997), 173–85.

⁵³ Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, *art. cit.*, 33. This is true in the Early Modern period, but also in the 19th century (see for example Philip Otterness, *op. cit.*, 3; Emilio Franzina, "Il Tricolore degli emigranti," in Fiorenza Tarozi, Giorgio Vecchio (eds.), *Gli italiani e il tricolore. Patriottismo, identità nazionale e fratture sociali lungo due secoli di storia*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999, 295–310).

⁵⁴ For a few examples of these difficulties, see Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America*, New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers University Press, 1998; Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916–39*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 2008; Shirley J. Yee, *An Immigrant Neighborhood: Interethnic and Interracial Encounters in New York before 1930*, Philadelphia (PA): Temple University Press, 2012. By contrast, a number of ethnographic studies have managed to describe how ethnic categories are established,

Segmentations of the social are not the only area where progress can be made. Analytical barriers also exist on the cultural side of migration history. There as well, two main dichotomies structure the intellectual production. One separates parameters of difference from each other; another disjoins the top-down, institutional discourse on difference from its grass-roots equivalent.

The first division reflects the cautious pace at which most historians have taken advantage of the malleable conception of categories such as ethnicity, identity, nation and gender, introduced by the postmodern critique. Studies addressing the salience and connection of more than one of those parameters are still a minority.

Let us briefly outline the progress that has been made with regard to these concepts. Concerning ethnicity, the interactionist model put forward by Frederik Barth marked a crucial breakthrough. It insists on the construction of boundaries between an “us” and a “them,” rather than on the “cultural stuff” within the group.⁵⁵ Many are the anthropologists who agree today that as social constructs, ethnic boundaries can be redefined and displaced depending on the circumstances.⁵⁶ Some have even criticised the mere idea of boundaries as insufficiently fluid.⁵⁷ A growing body of literature is trying to stay away from essentialist presuppositions.⁵⁸ What is at stake, in these

reproduced and negotiated in everyday interactions. See e.g. Mark A. Pachucki, Sabrina Pendergrass, Michèle Lamont, “Boundary Processes: Recent Theoretical Developments and New Contributions,” *Poetics*, Vol. 35 (2007), No. 6, 331–51.

⁵⁵ Frederik Barth (ed.), *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969, 15.

⁵⁶ See Joan Vincent, “The Structure of Ethnicity,” *Human Organization*, Vol. 33 (1974), No. 4, 375–89.

⁵⁷ Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: Sage, 1997, 21. Jenkins claimed that the model of social boundaries as a surrender to the assumption of inevitable, social separations between groups.

⁵⁸ Richard Jenkins, *op. cit.*, 13–4. On essentialism, see Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press, 1992, 228; Francisco Gil-White, “Are Ethnic Groups Biological ‘Species’ to the Human Brain?: Essentialism in Our Cognition of Some Social Categories,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 42 (2001), No. 4, 515–54; Andreas Wimmer, “Herder’s Heritage and the Boundary-Making Approach: Studying Ethnicity in Immigrant Societies,”

studies, is not what an ethnic group, a race or a nation *is*, but rather how those categories actually *work*.⁵⁹

Regarding the nation, the so-called developmentalist frameworks of analysis elaborated in the 1980s have also proved fruitful, insofar as they have helped debunk the classical, static vision of the nation. But these historicising efforts did not fully embrace contingency, nor did they repudiate teleological approaches. Nation-building remains something that may, and ought to, be completed.⁶⁰ When scholars look at how France or Germany “became” what they are, just like when they research how immigrants “became” Swedes, Italians or Germans, the glass of constructivism is only half full.⁶¹ Too often does “what they are” sound like “what they were meant to be and remain forever after.”

Remarkably, recent studies in sociology or social psychology have had a sharper analytical edge since the late 1990s, treating differentiation mechanisms not only as *social phenomena* but also as *cognitive practices*.⁶² The structures and singularities of

Sociological Theory, Vol. 27 (2009), No. 3, 244–70; *Id.*, *Ethnic Boundary Making: Institutions, Power, Networks*, Oxford, New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁵⁹ Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity, Race and Nationalism,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 35 (2009), 29.

⁶⁰ Ernest Gellner himself, whose major contribution was to identify nationalistic ontology and the anachronisms that come with it, has shown a tendency to treat nations, once formed, as homogenous, delimited objects (see Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 1983). Benedict Anderson was no exception, despite the importance of his work to understand the mechanisms allowing the nations to take hold in representations (Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso, 1991, 2nd ed.).

⁶¹ The trend of the “becoming” studies has not faded since the 1980s. For a few examples, see Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity*, Princeton (NJ), Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004; Philip Otterness, *Becoming German. The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York*, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 2004; Stefano Luconi, “Becoming Italian in the U.S. Through the Lens of Life Narratives,” *MELUS*, Vol. 29 (2004), Nos. 3–4; Didier Fassin, Sarah Mazouz, “Qu’est-ce que devenir français ?,” *Revue française de sociologie*, Vol. 48 (2007), No. 4, 723–50; Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition*, New York (NY): New York University Press, 2014; Ervin B. Costa, “Becoming Italian, Becoming American: Ethnic Affinity as a Strategy of Boundary Making,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 15 Feb. 2018, 1–19.

⁶² See Paul DiMaggio, “Culture and Cognition,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 23 (1997), 263–87; Rogers Brubaker, Mara Loveman, Peter Stamatov, “Ethnicity as Cognition,” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 33 (2004), No. 1, 31–64. See also William H. Sewell Jr., “Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful

these practices, the theory goes, are permanently reconfigured through the agents' lived experiences. Historiography, in that respect, is largely trailing. For all the risks of diluting historicity if insufficient attention is paid to change, the arguments in favour of the cognitive model seem convincing enough, especially inasmuch as it helps stitch together individual agency and social configurations. This approach will be inspiring a lot of analyses in this dissertation.⁶³

On the whole, thanks in part to a growing awareness of cognitive processes, ethnicity perpetuates itself nowadays as a more or less variable parameter of distinction. In truth, the devil of reification seems to have put on another mask, through the concept of identity. No less riddled with epistemological frailties than ethnicity, identity has seen a dramatic upswing in its intellectual fortunes over the past three decades, notwithstanding its questionable added value. Almost two decades ago, Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper had powerfully warned against the shortcomings of the notion of identity, both in its hard (essentialist) and soft (constructivist) forms.⁶⁴ They had pointed to other words that may better encompass the various meanings of identity, while removing its static connotation. "Identification," in particular, seemed much more effective in order to convey the contingent and provisional character of cultural dynamics taking place in the social. We share this view, which is why we will stick to the notion of identification throughout this thesis.⁶⁵

Sociology," in Terrence J. McDonald (ed.), *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, Ann Arbor (MI): University of Michigan Press, 1996, 245–80.

⁶³ Anders Lisdorf, "Towards a Cognitive Historiography – Frequently Posed Objections," in Panayiotis Pachis, Donald Wiebe (eds.), *Chasing Down Religion: In the Sights of History and the Cognitive Sciences. Essays in Honor of Luther H. Martin*, Thessaloniki: Barbounakis, 2010, 233–42.

⁶⁴ Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *art. cit.* To be fair, some scholars like the Italian anthropologist Francesco Remotti (unreferenced in Brubaker and Cooper's article) had started questioning the validity of the notion a few years before. See Francesco Remotti, *Contro l'identità*, Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1996.

⁶⁵ Note that the term "identification" is polysemous in French migration studies, as it may also refer, in the socio-historical perspective promoted by Gérard Noiriel and his followers, to a concept used to investigate the role of the state in the populations' control, counting and identity ascriptions. See Gérard Noiriel (ed.), *L'Identification. Genèse d'un travail d'État*, Paris: Belin, 2007. The meaning we shall retain for the purposes of this dissertation is the broader one proposed by Brubaker and Cooper.

The question remains as to how to apply constructivism in the most effective way.⁶⁶ All the more so, since the categories of difference have lay versions in the social, the performative character of which actually produces, on a daily basis, concrete individual and collective actions.⁶⁷ The problem is that these in-the-world, explicit differentiations obliterate as much as they reveal about cognitive self-understandings, which are ambiguous, mutable and idiosyncratic.⁶⁸ Administrative identifications, for instance, do produce social difference, just as other cultural encodings of the social. But the agents' manifold allegiances are not a univocal, irresistible phenomenon; people never passively subscribe to exogenous categories, administrative or otherwise.

Despite its all-encompassing meaning, the vogue of identity has largely failed to inspire studies of multiple social differentiation criteria. An example of this is to be found with gender. Early incorporated into migration studies, gender both as a concept and as an object of study spearheaded broader constructivist efforts in the 1990s, becoming resolutely interdisciplinary.⁶⁹ The success of gender-based studies combining, for instance, family history with micro-economic accounts of female work and anthropological analyses of sexuality or motherhood shall not be minimised. But the role played by migrant women in dynamics of ethno-national identifications, or in the interactions between groups, is still little known, as is, conversely, the influence of

⁶⁶ The question is raised by Charles Tilly in his review of Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2004: Charles Tilly, "Avoiding the Ethnicity Trap," *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 21 (2006), No. 3, 523–5.

⁶⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, "L'identité et la représentation: éléments pour une réflexion critique sur l'idée de région," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, Vol. 35 (1980), No. 35, 63–72.

⁶⁸ For a case-study, see Rogers Brubaker, Margit Feischmidt, Jon Fox, Liana Grancea, *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity in a Transylvanian Town*, Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2006.

⁶⁹ On gender and migration, see Suzanne Sinke, "Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 40 (2006), No. 1, 82–103. The edited volume *Unequal Sisters*, released in 1990, gathered contributions that deconstructed the commonly agreed interpretations on the feminine experience hitherto regarded, for want of reflexivity, as relatively homogenous, at least within the American middle-class. Vicki L. Ruiz, Ellen Carol DuBois (eds.), *Unequal Sisters: A Multicultural Reader in U.S. Women's History*, New York (NY): Routledge, 1990.

those processes over gender relations.⁷⁰ The age of proper “intersectionality” is still awaited in migration studies.⁷¹ Many studies on womanhood and ethnicity take at least one of these two identification systems for a most rigid and unquestionable set of characteristics.⁷²

Aside from gender, the custom of not addressing more than one sociocultural parameter at a time also applies to older types of historical studies that pair ethnicity and class,⁷³ or nation and religion.⁷⁴ It would certainly be the case for age as well in the historiography of migrant children and that of the migrant elderly, if only such literatures existed.⁷⁵ In fairness, the more minority parameters in play (migrant + female + children + working class, etc.), the harder it is to document these situations,

⁷⁰ On migration and gendered transitions, see i.a. Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Gendered Transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration*, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1994. For a reflection on gender and ethnicity, see Diane Vecchio, “Ties of Affection: Family Narratives in the History of Italian Migration,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 25 (2006), 117–33.

⁷¹ The meaning of the term “intersectionality” has been broadened since its inception in the cradle of activist feminism. See Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Leslie McCall, “Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis,” Vol. 38 (2013) No. 4, 785–810.

⁷² For an example among many others, see Katie Friedman-Kasaba, *Memories of Migration: Gender, Ethnicity, and Work in the Lives of Jewish and Italian Women in New York, 1870-1924*, Albany (NY): State University of New York Press, 1996.

⁷³ Only post-Marxist studies have managed to sustain a real reflection on both class and ethnicity. See e.g. Kathleen Conzen’s work on Milwaukee, building on earlier progress made by Herbert Gutman and Alan Dawley: Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1976; Herbert Gutman, “Class, Status and Community Power in Nineteenth Century American Industrial Cities – Paterson, New Jersey: A Case Study,” in Frederick C. Jaher (ed.), *The Age of Industrialism in America*, New York (NY): Free Press, 1968, 263–87; Alan Dawley, *Class and Community: The Industrial Revolution in Lynn*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1976. See also, for a largely structural, yet intersectional account on ethnicity and class, Dirk Hoerder (ed.), *“Struggle a Hard Battle”: Essays on Working-Class Immigrants*, De Kalb (IL): Northern Illinois University Press, 1986.

⁷⁴ See e.g. Naomi Davidson, *Only Muslim: Embodying Islam in Twentieth-Century France*, Ithaca (NY), London: Cornell University Press, 2012.

⁷⁵ The extremely rare historical studies on age and migration suffer clearly for an absence of questioning of either ethnicity or age (or both), as in Wendy Rouse Jorae, *The Children of Chinatown: Growing Up Chinese American in San Francisco, 1850-1920*, Chapel Hill (NC): University of North Carolina, 2009. In any case, historians of children in general barely integrate any reflection on mobility situations at all: see e.g. Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Nineteenth-Century France: Work, Health and Education Among the “Classes Populaires,”* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. When they do, it is not a proper historical study: see Melissa Klapper, *Small Strangers: The Experiences of Immigrant Children in America, 1880-1925*, Chicago (IL): Ivan R. Dee, 2007.

given the scarcer number of traces in the archives. But this can only partially explain the scholars' reluctance to juggle with more than one differentiation variables.

Besides the separate treatment of identification parameters, the second fault line constraining epistemological innovation with regard to the cultural experience of migrants runs between the institutional approach of difference, and the lay discourse about it.

The interest in the institutional standpoint has been prompted by an increasingly popular concept, citizenship.⁷⁶ Thinking in terms of citizenship helps, first of all, connect social and political histories.⁷⁷ Citizenship also has the advantage of stirring a conversation about the dynamics of inclusion-exclusion based on official identifications.⁷⁸ In that respect, scholars have highlighted the contingencies in applying immigration law, along with the bottom-up influence migrants have in shaping the categories that ultimately determine their rights in relation to the State.⁷⁹ And yet the interest for institutions and legal categories has had an undesirable side effect, by contributing to the perpetuation of the national scope of migration studies.

On the other hand, multiple works have developed, over the past two decades, innovating approaches beyond or beneath nation-states, in response to the general

⁷⁶ The theoretical groundwork has been laid in particular by Gershon Shafir (ed.), *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

⁷⁷ It does so by drawing attention, as Norbert Elias had called for, to the nexus between, on the one side, an awareness of individual rights, and on the other, the political stances and formalised norms issued by parliaments, courts and administrative bodies. In that sense, citizenship marks the return of the State, but also of civil society, in the social and cultural equations of social sciences (see Norbert Elias, *La Société des individus*, Paris : Fayard, 1987).

⁷⁸ Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*, Princeton (NJ), Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004; Dorothee Schneider, *Crossing Borders: Migration and Citizenship in the Twentieth-Century United States*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2011.

⁷⁹ Mary D. Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918-1940*, Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press, 2007; Claire Zalc, *Dénaturalisés: les retraits de nationalité sous Vichy*, Paris: Seuil, 2016.

interest aroused by globalisation.⁸⁰ One type of these so-called “transnational studies” is sometimes referred to as “relational.” Owing much to the post-structuralist context of the cultural studies from the 1970s and 1980s, this body of literature deals with the interactions, exchanges, constructions and translations that happen whenever apparent boundaries get crossed by people, goods or ideas. Whether “connected,”⁸¹ “shared,”⁸² “circulatory,”⁸³ or “crossed,”⁸⁴ these approaches do not necessarily entail a crossing of national borders, contrary to what the etymology of “transnational” initially suggested. It is the object under scrutiny, the observed phenomenon, that should warrant the appropriate scale. Therefore, transnational history at a local level is not an oxymoron, even though few have attempted it thus far.⁸⁵

In migration matters, lexical complexity is even greater than elsewhere, since two sorts of transnational approaches coexist. One pertains to the ties the immigrants keep with their homeland. This paradigm of a connected ethnicity, so to speak, was launched in the early 1990s.⁸⁶ The other transnationalism is the afore-mentioned relational approach, which refers to the methods of analysis. It can apply in various ways to the migration context –inquiring into the relations between migrants is

⁸⁰ See for instance Pierre-Yves Saunier, “Circulations, connexions et espaces transnationaux,” *Genèses*, No. 57 (2004), 110–26.

⁸¹ See Sanjay Subrahmanyam, “Connected Histories: Toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia,” in V. B. Liebermann (ed.), *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-imagining Eurasia to c. 1830*, Ann Arbor (MI): University of Michigan Press, 1997, 289–315.

⁸² See Ann Laura Stoler, Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a Research Agenda,” in Ann Laura Stoler, Frederick Cooper (eds.), *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1997, 1–56.

⁸³ See Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Knowledge in South Asia and Europe, 1650-1900*, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

⁸⁴ Michael Werner, Bénédicte Zimmermann, “Penser l’histoire croisée: entre empirie et réflexivité,” *Annales. Histories, sciences sociales*, Vol. 58 (2003), No. 1, 7–36.

⁸⁵ See Angelika Epple, “Lokalität und die Dimensionen des Globalen. Eine Frage der Relationen,” *Historische Anthropologie*, Vol. 21 (2013), No. 1, 4–25.

⁸⁶ Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, Cristina Blanc-Szanton, “Transnationalism: A New Analytic Framework for Understanding Migration,” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 645 (1992), 1–24. Although it was largely a rebranding of well-known phenomena, the emphasis on transnationalism resulted in useful developments on the modalities of the immigrants’ cross-border connections, and reduced the hypertrophy of single-nation frameworks (see Donna R. Gabaccia, “Is Everywhere Nowhere? Nomads, Nations, and the Immigrant Paradigm of United States History,” *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86 (1999), No. 3, 1115–34).

certainly one of them. Too often do historians of international migration, who believe they are by definition engaging with transnational crossings, fail to look at other relational dynamics happening within or across national boundaries. This is another point on which this thesis is meant to make a contribution.

In a nutshell, enduring analytical silos in the social and the cultural call for new initiatives that can connect the advances made in the various strands of migration history, and push things further. The field could also experiment with different spatial and temporal extensions of its objects of study.

Conventional demarcations in space and time

Spatial segmentations of the historiography of migration in France are due, at least, to three mutually reinforcing biases. Most scholars are aware of them, but they could do more to fend them off. These tendencies consist in an administrative naturalism, a methodological nationalism, and an aspiration to historiographical legitimacy through demographics.

First, the administrative naturalism consists in taking legal and political denominations for immutable things-in-the-world, and applying them on the past as natural frameworks of analysis, with little awareness of the “epistemological unconscious.”⁸⁷ This stems in part from the way archives are located, sorted and classified.⁸⁸ For instance, the migrants of Paris and of the banlieue continue to be, most

⁸⁷ The expression was coined by Pierre Bourdieu in *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*, Paris: Droz, 1972, quoted by Paul-André Rosental, *Les Sentiers invisibles. Espaces, familles et migrations dans la France du XIX^e siècle*, Paris: Éditions de l'EHESS, 1999, 15. In his introduction to this volume, Rosental has very enlightening considerations about the impact of administrative categories, however contingent they actually are, on migration analysis.

⁸⁸ See Philippe Rygiel, “Archives et historiographie de l’immigration,” *Migrations*, No. 33 (2009), 50–9; Paule René-Bazin, “The Influence of Politics on the Shaping of the Memory of States in Western Europe (France),” in Francis X. Blouin Jr., William G. Rosenberg (eds.), *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, Ann Arbor (MI): University of Michigan Press, 2007, 353–60; Étienne Anheim, “Singulières archives. Le statut des archives dans

of the time, treated separately by local studies, altering the assessment of the migrants' individual lived geographies:⁸⁹ even at the time of the fortifications, the separation between the capital and its suburbs was far from impermeable. Administrative and archival divisions also contribute to setting apart “internal” and “foreign” migrants in the historiography, regardless both of the experiences they might share and of their mutual relationships. Migration specialists usually leave internal migrants to demographers and demographic historians.⁹⁰

Second, a well-identified and much-criticised methodological nationalism is still prevalent in migration studies –all the more surprisingly for a field whose main interests lie on displacements and mobility.⁹¹ Social processes are viewed, by default, from the perspective of presumably existing “national societies” at both ends of the migrating process, with assimilation and integration as central concepts. Foreigners and French nationals are seen, *ex-ante*, as fundamentally different, as are colonial

l'épistémologie historique. Une discussion de *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* de Paul Ricœur,” *Revue de Synthèse*, No. 125 (2004), 153–82.

⁸⁹ For Paris, among hundreds of publications that keep the banlieue out of the Paris narrative, see Annie Benveniste, *Le Bosphore à la Roquette. La communauté judéo-espagnole à Paris (1914-1990)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1989; Pascal Blanchard, Éric Deroo, *Le Paris Asie: 150 ans de présence de la Chine, de l'Indochine, du Japon, dans la capitale*, Paris: La Découverte, 2004; Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, *Les Italiens dans l'Est parisien. Une histoire d'intégration (années 1880-1960)*, Rome: École française de Rome, 2000. As for the banlieue without Paris, see Noëlle Gérôme, Danielle Tartakowsky, Claude Willard (eds.), *La Banlieue en fête: de la marginalité urbaine à l'identité culturelle*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1988.

⁹⁰ Although seminal works on mobility have influenced the way international migrants were approached by French historians in the 1990s (see in particular the influence, on Philippe Rygiel's work, of Jean-Luc Pinol, *Les Mobilités de la grande ville. Lyon, fin XIX^e-début XX^e*, Paris: Presses de la F.N.S.P., 1991), very few books have tried to connect the research projects on internal migrants in the banlieues and histories of foreign migrations. And yet an awareness of the matter had emerged at least in the early 1990s (see Caroline Douki's remarks in “Table ronde. Un siècle d'immigration italienne en région parisienne (1880-1980): les voies de l'intégration,” *La Trace. Cahiers du Centre d'études et de documentation sur l'émigration italienne*, No. 6 (Sept. 1992), 10). One of the existing attempts is Jean-Paul Brunet (ed.), *Immigration, vie politique et populisme en banlieue parisienne*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1995. However, it juxtaposes the two types of migrations and does not really try to integrate them in a single narrative. The main study on internal migration into the suburbs of Paris remains Jean-Claude Farcy, Alain Faure, *La Mobilité d'une génération de Français. Recherche sur les migrations et les déménagements vers et dans Paris à la fin du XIX^e siècle*, Paris: INED, 2003.

⁹¹ Andreas Wimmer, Nina Glick Schiller, “Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social sciences,” *Global Networks*, Vol. 2 (2002), No. 4, 301–34.

subjects and foreign migrants.⁹² This perspective also encourages a nationalistic approach of ethnicity. Categories such as Italianness, Chineseness, Turkishness, give priority, more or less explicitly, to national identifications. Moreover, a number of migration historians overwhelmingly derive their knowledge from works relating to the country they are studying themselves. This enduring bibliographic parochialism stems in part from the difficulty to read foreign languages, which also impedes the construction of objects of study involving sources in multiple languages.⁹³

Third, migration history is affected by a long-standing, positivist conviction that its main source of legitimacy is to be found in demographic considerations. The goal of the French historiography of migration, for instance, has long consisted in restoring the importance of immigration in French history, based on aggregate numbers of immigrants. The core of the argument was that migrants formed a much larger group than what the classic, national historiography had been willing to acknowledge. Echoing a political presence of immigration in the European public debate since the early 1990s, exclusively framed in numbers by population categories –asylum seekers, refugees, economic immigrants, students, removed foreigners, etc.–, migration history in general remains haunted by a need to justify its own existence by quantitative considerations.⁹⁴ The idea that the importance of a phenomenon is proportional to its

⁹² The national fragmentation is also to be seen in the historiographical landscape, often marked by impermeable, if invisible, barriers. Historians of French territory, like their counterparts working on other countries, allow themselves to move their lens onto another place in France, or to another place in the country of emigration of which they are a specialist. But very seldom do they look at other contexts, or regions going across national boundaries, except for a few exceptions related to specific academic and life journeys (see for instance the comparative work of Nancy Green, *Du Sentier à la 7^e avenue*, Paris: Seuil, 1998).

⁹³ To this day, the bibliography of historians working on migration-related issues in France have a small share of their content that relates to migration in other contexts (Gérard Noiriel's *French Melting Pot*, for instance, had only 4,5% of secondary references in his bibliography pertaining to migration outside of the French context, 25 out of 544), and this share is mostly an obliged tribute paid to an American literature that serves as a legitimacy tool more than as a real pool of theories and practices to engage seriously with.

⁹⁴ See e.g. the introductory remarks of Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting Pot*, *op. cit.*, or Geneviève Dreyfus-Armand, "L'immigration espagnole en banlieue parisienne: la diversité des flux migratoires, 1918-1968," in Jean-Paul Brunet (ed.), *Immigration, vie politique...*, *op. cit.*, 131–52. For an example from another historiographical tradition using the same legitimization rhetoric: Javier Rubio, *La*

size is still one of the most common stereotypes unwittingly embraced by migration scholars.⁹⁵ This Labroussian inclination, which did produce valuable results thanks to the early help of computer technologies, seems to account in large part for the lack of microhistorical interest in the mobility experience.⁹⁶ This is unfortunate, since going micro does not mean eschewing statistical analysis, as this thesis will hopefully demonstrate. In addition, since the main sources for migration demographics are national ones, the quantitative passion tends to reinforce the methodological nationalism through predefined epistemological divisions.

Along with a preference for political issues, those proclivities have left their imprint on the historiography regarding Saint-Denis and Paris northern banlieues. For a long time, that literature showed barely any interest in migration. The first histories of that area in its modern days were economic and urbanistic.⁹⁷ Their authors were mostly historians of techniques, whose meticulous and comprehensive collections of industrial sites remain helpful.⁹⁸ Beyond ethnographic descriptions from the early 20th

Emigración española a Francia, Barcelona: Ariel, 1974, 15. Even investigations deliberately centred on the “intimate,” such as Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race*, *op. cit.*, go through an initial anointment by the power of big numbers (see p. 1). The problem is that those numbers are taken for neutral, and their adverse effects on the historical narrative almost never discussed.

⁹⁵ On this erroneous belief, see Jacques Revel (ed.), *Jeux d'échelles*, Paris: Gallimard/Seuil, 1996, 11.

⁹⁶ See Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, Philippe Rygiel (eds.), “Chiffres et histoire,” *Siècles*, No. 6, Université Blaise-Pascal/Clermont-Ferrand II, 1997. Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud, Philippe Rygiel and Éric Guichard were pioneers in the application of computer science to French immigration history, and based their computations on the 1931 and 1936 national censuses. In the realm of migration, the first scholar to have explicitly highlighted the role of figures in immigration analysis and policy was Guy Prévost, with “Des chiffres et des hommes: les étrangers en France,” *Hommes et migrations*, No. 113 (1969), 8–45.

⁹⁷ As evidenced by several theses such as Michelle Pellen, “L'évolution urbaine de Pantin, 1870-1955,” master's thesis in geography, University of Paris, 1956; Jean-François Nicol, “L'industrialisation de la commune de Saint-Denis dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle,” master's thesis in history, University of Paris X, 1972; Bernard Bastien, “Saint-Denis. Évolution urbaine, évolution du mode de vie et de la sociabilité populaire,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris VII, 1984.

⁹⁸ *Évolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris et sa proche banlieue au XIX^e siècle, vol. II: Vers la maturité de l'industrie parisienne, 1872-1914*, Centre de documentation et d'histoire des techniques, 1976. For a recent version of that approach, see André Guillerme, Anne-Cécile Lefort, Gérard Jigaudon, *Dangereux, insalubres et incommodes. Paysages industriels en banlieue parisienne, XIX^e-XX^e siècles*, Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2004.

century, archival inventories and scattered testimonies were about all that could be found on the fate of workers living in the northern banlieues.⁹⁹ That changed when Marxist historians started delving into this history.¹⁰⁰ And yet even Jean-Paul Brunet's major political history of Saint-Denis did not examine in detail the living conditions of the working class, which account for only 32 of the dissertation's 1647 pages.¹⁰¹ Besides, his narrative, so nuanced and fine-grained in its political analyses, held onto a fixist vision of ethnicity in its sparse comments about foreigners and migrants.¹⁰² Undiscussed remained his allusions to a "Saint-Denis melting-pot," or to the "natural" propensity of people from the same regions to live together.¹⁰³ Dismissing attempts at micro-explanations as "futile," he had no time to spare on the uncertainties of

⁹⁹ The works of Jean Lemoine, or the reactionary journalist Jacques Valdour, are representative of the early ethnographic literature on the banlieue. See Jean Lemoine, "L'émigration bretonne à Paris," *Science sociale*, 7th year, Vol. 14 (1892), No. 1, 39–60, 165–84, 239–48, 362–73; Jacques Valdour, *Les Puissances de désordre: vers la Révolution: ouvriers de la Plaine-Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, Paris-Belleville*, Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1935. On the importance of Valdour's "observations vécues" see Bernard Valade, "Un marginal de la science sociale: Jacques Valdour," *Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, Vol. 51 (2013), No. 1, 213–33. Archival directories and collections of individual accounts started appearing in the early 1980s. See e.g. Lucien Klausner (ed.), *Ouvrières et ouvriers au XIX^e siècle dans l'actuel département de la Seine-Saint-Denis*, Bobigny: Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis, 1983–5; Pierre de Peretti, *Saint-Denis, 1870-1920*, Saint-Denis: ville de Saint-Denis, 1983.

¹⁰⁰ In particular, with Claude Willard, Danielle Tartakowsky, Jean-Louis Robert and the other participants in a CNRS research group on the subject in the late 1980s. See Virginie Linhart, "Le Greco 'banlieues' et changements urbains" (1986-1989) ou la difficulté de l'interdisciplinarité dans la recherche," *La Revue pour l'histoire du CNRS*, Vol. 14 (2006) [on-line].

¹⁰¹ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière: Saint-Denis (1890-1939). Problèmes d'implantation du socialisme et du communisme," thesis for the "state doctorate," University of Paris IV, 1978, Lille: Service de reproduction des thèses, 1978 (5 Vol.), 434–47; 1110–27. Significantly the socio-demographic side of the research was left out of the published version of the thesis, *Saint-Denis, la ville rouge: socialisme et communisme en banlieue ouvrière, 1890-1939*, Paris: Hachette, 1980. Unlike Brunet's, the fine dissertations of Annie Fourcaut on the political history of Bobigny in the broader context of the "red" banlieues and Matthieu Poletti on the autonomisation of Colombes, have remained unpublished, as have the accounts of Juliette Aubrun and Emmanuel Bellanger, both concerned with a sociological history of political power at municipal level. Other existing historical accounts are chiefly monographic master's theses taking on one particular domain of public policy (on all these dissertations, see the bibliography at the end of this volume).

¹⁰² See Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 107-147; 172–6; 792–806. This classic defect also tainted two master's theses that tried to approach Saint-Denis foreigners with a demographical history perspective, in the following years: Joaquim Biscaia, "Les gens dans un système: le quartier résidentiel des étrangers à Saint-Denis et Stains," master's thesis in history, University of Paris VIII, 1983; Hélène Fraye-Ouanas, Sylviane Viscogliosi, "Saint-Denis, ville d'immigration: les étrangers dans la Cité (1900-1930)," master's thesis in history, University of Paris X, 1993.

¹⁰³ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 255; 804.

ethnicity.¹⁰⁴ To his credit, fifteen years later, he acknowledged that “the game of interethnic relations [was] probably more complex than it seem[ed].”¹⁰⁵

Indeed, from the mid 1990s onwards the history of the suburban lower classes attracted a new, cross-cutting interest in the wake of renewed political debates. In particular, the workers’ social movement during and the Great War and its immediate aftermath elicited new attention.¹⁰⁶ A widely respected historian of communism, Jacques Girault, convened a seminar in 1995-1996 at the University of Paris XIII, with the intention of promoting “a history of the individual,” with a strong emphasis on workers’ biographical itineraries which echoed the famous “Maitron” enterprise.¹⁰⁷ Between 2003 and 2005, an interdisciplinary seminar aiming at telling a common history of the capital and its banlieues, was the first to examine their relations over a long past –a first bridge over the segmentations inherited from the political and administrative cultures.¹⁰⁸ A session of that seminar was even marked by another breakthrough: a comprehensive approach of both internal and international migrants.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ *Id.*, 172.

¹⁰⁵ Jean-Paul Brunet, “Introduction. La Banlieue au miroir de l’immigration,” in *Id.* (ed.), *Immigration, vie politique...*, *op. cit.*, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Jean-Louis Robert, “Ouvriers et mouvement ouvrier parisien pendant la Grande Guerre et l’immédiat après-guerre,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris I, 1989, 9 vol.; *Id.*, *Les Ouvriers, la patrie et la révolution: Paris 1914-1919*, Besançon: Presses universitaires de Franche-Comté, 1995.

¹⁰⁷ See Jacques Girault, *L’Implantation du parti communiste en France dans l’entre-deux-guerres*, Paris: Éditions sociales, 1975; Jean Maitron, Claude Pennetier (eds.), *Dictionnaire biographique du mouvement ouvrier*, Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1969-1993; Conseil général de la Seine-Saint-Denis, université Paris 13, *Mémoires d’usines*, No.1, 1995, 3. Girault’s seminar translated into a precious edited volume: Jacques Girault (ed.), *Ouvriers en banlieue, XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris: Éditions de l’Atelier/Éditions ouvrières, 1998.

¹⁰⁸ See Annie Fourcaut, Mathieu Flonneau (eds.), *Une Histoire croisée de Paris et de ses banlieues à l’époque contemporaine. Bibliographie, bilan d’étape*, Paris: ville de Paris, 2005, and *Bulletin du CHS*, No. 28 (2005), 98–100. At the initiative of this research seminar was the new socialist municipality of Paris elected in 2001.

¹⁰⁹ The session brought together a seasoned demographic historian on internal migration, Jean-Claude Farcy, and two young researchers on foreigners in the first half of the 20th century, Claire Zalc and Natacha Lillo. Still a few years earlier, the innovation that historians would display in thinking migration in a spatialized way had not translated into bridging the gap between French migrants and foreigners: see Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, “L’habitat immigré à Paris, XIX^e-XX^e siècles: mondes à part?,” *Le Mouvement social*, No. 82 (Jan.-March 1998), 29–50.

Soon the interwar period and the Second World War in the northern banlieues became more familiar to historians. In particular, Natacha Lillo's history of the "Petite Espagne" –the name under which a vast and discontinuous area covering parts of Aubervilliers, la Plaine-Saint-Denis and Saint-Ouen came to be known from the 1930s– contributed to filling the gap.¹¹⁰ In addition to Spaniards, the area happened to host many Italians, Gypsies and French Southerners.¹¹¹ As insightful as it was on politicisation, transnationalism, and social conditions, Lillo's effort remained hampered by some theoretical and methodological blind spots. First, it embraced the classical, mono-ethnic approach, never quite addressing why Spaniards made for a legitimate category of analysis. Second, the study was built on the unchallenged assumption of the existence of a Spanish neighbourhood in the Plaine-Saint-Denis. Lillo even qualified it as something close to a "ghetto in the American sense," without any solid evidence to support that claim.¹¹² Unlike Brunet, whose concerns revolved mostly around city hall, Lillo did notice the buildings at 96 and 100 Avenue de Paris. Unsurprisingly, however, they failed to elicit her interest: the place was outside what she perceived as the ethnic core of the growing Spanish area. Instead of seeing the

¹¹⁰ Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'. Histoire comparée des trois principales vagues migratoires à Saint-Denis et dans sa région au XX^e siècle," doctoral diss. in history, IEP Paris, 2001, 3 vol. See also the afore-mentioned condensed version of this research: Natacha Lillo, *La Petite Espagne...*, *op. cit.*

¹¹¹ In addition to Lillo's research, the Spanish history of the Plaine has become more and more familiar to scholars and also local residents, thanks to regular exhibitions. For instance, a round-table and an exhibition were organised about the Petite Espagne on 17 Sept. 2014, on regional funds. The "Hogar de los Españoles," located in the Plaine-Saint-Denis (see chapter 4) hosts regular exhibitions organized by the FACEEF (Fédération d'associations et centres d'émigrés espagnols en France): e.g. "Les républicains espagnols pour témoins, 1930-1975," 20-21 September 2009. Other projects include pedagogical efforts in schools, such as "La Petite Espagne," a photographic project led by photographer Arnaud Chambon with pupils of the collège Jean-Jaurès, in Montfermeil, in 2013-2014. We can also mention theatre plays (Maguy Marin, "La Petite Espagne à Aubervilliers," Théâtre de la Commune, Aubervilliers, 2-14 Dec. 2014) and documentary films: [Édouard Luntz, *Les Enfants des courants d'air*, 1959](#); [Sophie Sensier, *La Petite Espagne*, 2006](#); [Alain Le Bacquer, *Les Résistants de la Petite Espagne*, 2014](#).

¹¹² Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'...", *op. cit.*, 133–7. In addition, some of the key concepts used in the dissertation were left undefined: not only ghetto, but also integration, identity, and networks.

diversity of the population in the buildings, she noticed the incompleteness of what she was looking for –Spaniards living together.¹¹³

By contrast, Leslie Page Moch's book on the Bretons of Saint-Denis and of the 14th arrondissement insisted clearly on the contingent construction of the Bretons' ethnic traits.¹¹⁴ That work also had the merit to exploit sources that had been neglected by both Brunet and Lillo, namely the registers of local police stations. And yet it did not go as far as to escape some of the most inhibiting traits of community studies –the presumed relevance of ethnicity, a limited interest in interethnic interactions, and a major reliance on ethnic sources.

These academic efforts were supplemented by local, non-professional initiatives, which resulted in extensive chronicles and a local historical society of the Plaine.¹¹⁵ In the 1990s, the Plaine-Saint-Denis even received its first historiographical monograph as a distinctive territory, a century after a similar synthesis had first been published on Saint-Denis as a whole.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ See the sentence on the "*immeubles de rapport*" of the avenue du Président Wilson, which clearly designate the cités, and compare it with the title of the article: Natacha Lillo, "Coexistence des migrants," *Projet*, Special Issue, April 2008 (available on-line, last consulted January 28, 2017). The exact same bias appears in Natacha Lillo, "Naissance et évolution d'un quartier en auto-construction (1922-1970)," in *Délégation interministérielle à la Ville – Études et recherches*, Special Issue (Dec. 2008), 22.

¹¹⁴ Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday: Breton Migrants in Paris*, London, Durham (NC): Duke University Press, 2012. The only other existing monograph on Bretons migrants in the Paris area at the turn of the 20th century is essentially a collection of photographs: Didier Violain, *Bretons de Paris. Des exilés en capitale*, Paris: Parigramme, 1997.

¹¹⁵ Pierre Douzenel, *À Saint-Denis, les rues aussi ont leur histoire*, 3 vol., 1981-1990 (from 1946 to 1987, Douzenel was the official photographer of the city of Saint-Denis). The historical society is called *Mémoire vivante de la Plaine* and has about thirty members. It released eight issues of "La Plaine. Il était une fois" between 1998 and 2001. They are available for downloading on the society's website, which has not been updated since 2008. See www.plaine-memoirevivante.fr (last accessed Feb. 23, 2018).

¹¹⁶ Anne Lombard-Jourdan, *La Plaine Saint-Denis: deux mille ans d'histoire*, Paris: C.N.R.S. Éditions, 1994. Roger Bourderon, Pierre de Peretti (eds.), *Histoire de Saint-Denis*, Toulouse: Privat, 1988; Fernand Bournon, *Histoire de la ville et du canton de Saint-Denis*, Paris: Delagrave, 1892. The very limited size of the considerations pertaining, in Lombard-Jourdan's book, to the modern history of the Plaine comes largely from its author being a medieval historian.

To this day, migration and culture remain among the most understudied aspects of suburban history.¹¹⁷ Perceived by scholars as being fundamentally distinct urban settings, the banlieues are too often separated from each other, and their mobile populations do not get their fair share of historiographic innovations. Furthermore, spatial boundaries are not the only rigid ones. Periodisation also contributes to shaping investigations on the late 19th and early 20th century.

For one thing, the Great War is still widely construed as an unquestionable turning point, and as an autonomous period. The attempt, led by a handful of scholars, to dig into the history of foreigners and colonial subjects in France during the war is still very much enclosed within the traditional dates of 1914 and 1918.¹¹⁸ More generally, the growing number of publications on the social history of France during the Great War do not usually venture outside the classical timeline of the war itself. This carries the risk of excessively singularising the war experience. It is true that the presence of “non-Whites” was largely a novelty on the French soil which had an impact on race and ethnicity dynamics.¹¹⁹ But for that new situation to be properly appraised, one needs to take into account what came before, whether in the metropolis or in the Empire.

Second, the reliance on administrative sources on migrants and foreigners has led to a disproportionate interest in the interwar period, in which new requirements and

¹¹⁷ The rare valuable initiatives on representations have failed, so far, to trigger significant research projects. See Jean-Louis Robert, Danielle Tartakowsky (eds.), *Paris le peuple, XVIII^e-XX^e siècles*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 1999; *Id.* (eds.), *Sociétés & représentations*, No. 8, “Le peuple en tous ses états,” Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne/CREDHESS, Feb. 2000.

¹¹⁸ John Horne, “Immigrant workers during World War I,” *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 14 (1985), No. 1, 57–88; Tyler Stovall, “Colour-Blind France? Colonial Workers During the First World War,” *Race and Class*, Vol. 35 (1993), No. 2, 35–55; *Id.*, “The Color-Line Behind the Lines,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 103 (1998), No. 3, 737–69; Marc Michel, *Les Africains dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Karthala, 2003; Li Ma (ed.), *Les Travailleurs chinois en France dans la Première Guerre mondiale*, Paris: CNRS, 2012; Mireille Le Van Ho, *Des Vietnamiens dans la Grande Guerre. 50 000 recrues dans les usines françaises*, Paris: Vendémiaire, 2014; Laurent Dornel, *Les Étrangers dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris: La Documentation française, 2014.

¹¹⁹ Laurent Dornel, “La Grande Guerre et les migrations: les travailleurs étrangers, coloniaux et chinois en France. Enjeux d’une recherche en cours,” 2013, HAL, archives ouvertes, halshs-00850981 (last accessed 26.01.2018).

procedures have produced more abundant records than at previous periods. After all, the introduction of the identity card for foreigners in France took place in 1917, and state-wide removal procedures only started in earnest in the 1920s. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the most innovative theses on immigration in France in recent decades have focused on that era.¹²⁰ Today, historical publications on migration which start after the Great War still outweigh, by a large margin, the works which dare take a longer perspective.¹²¹

Rare are the studies trying to sew together migrants from the interwar period with their peers from the Belle Époque.¹²² And yet both were often the same people. Many of those who returned to their region of origin during the conflict made their way back a few years later. Also, naturalisation files kept at the French national archives reveal that many new citizens of the 1920s and 1930s had arrived in France around 1900. This is why we believe that the features and factors of their life experiences cannot be properly understood without an analytical time frame that goes across the Great War.

¹²⁰ Philippe Rygiel, “Mais où sont les immigrés d’antan? Trajectoires sociogéographiques des membres des familles issues de l’immigration européenne implantées dans le Cher durant l’entre-deux-guerres,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Besançon, 1996; Clifford D. Rosenberg, “Republican surveillance: Immigration, citizenship, and the police in interwar Paris,” doctoral diss. in history, Princeton University, 2000; Mary D. Lewis, “The Company of Strangers: Immigration and Citizenship in Interwar Lyon and Marseille,” doctoral diss. in history, New York University, 2000; Claire Zalc, “Immigrants et indépendants. Parcours et contraintes. Les petits entrepreneurs étrangers dans le département de la Seine (1919-1939),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris X, 2002; Benoît Larbiou, “Connaître et traiter l’étranger: Les constructions sociales d’un savoir politique sur l’immigration 1914-1945,” doctoral diss. in political science, University of Montpellier I, 2003; Emanuela Miniati, “La migrazione antifascista dalla Liguria alla Francia tra le due guerre: Famiglie e soggettività attraverso le fonti private,” University of Genoa/University of Paris X, 2015.

¹²¹ When not explicit in the title, the disproportion between the period prior to the Great War and the more recent times is often striking in the massive imbalances of the topics or periods addressed in the books themselves: see Marianne Amar, Pierre Milza (eds.), *L’Immigration en France au XX^e siècle*, Paris: A. Colin, 1990; Éric Guichard, Gérard Noiriel (eds.), *Constructions des nationalités et immigration dans la France contemporaine*, Paris: Presses de l’ENS, 1997; Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, *Histoire de l’immigration*, Paris: La Découverte, 2001; Benjamin Stora, Émile Témime (eds.), *Immigrances. L’Immigration en France au XX^e siècle*, Paris: Fayard, 2007; Gérard Noiriel, *Immigration, antisémitisme et racisme en France (XIX^e-XX^e siècle). Discours publics, humiliations privées*, Paris: Fayard, 2007.

¹²² For rare examples, see Nimisha Barton, “Family Matters: Gender, Immigration and Acculturation in Paris, 1900-1945,” doctoral diss. in history, Princeton University, 2014; Stéphane Kronenberger, “Des temps de paix aux temps de guerre: les parcours des travailleurs étrangers de l’Est et du Sud-Est de la France (1871-1918),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Nice, 2014.

The chronological canon and its major rupture in 1914 also bear the trace of the fondness for the macro level and for national histories. At micro level, the war might not have been as disruptive for all civilians: not everyone moved, not everyone had a hard experience on the home front. When it came to living conditions or cultural representations, changes that a macro historian would promptly attribute to the conflict might have actually taken place before or after the war. And yet the attachment to the traditional time boundaries is so strong that even microhistorians often feel compelled to abide by them.¹²³

In addition, for all the global character of the Great War, the assumption that 1914 and 1918 (or 1919) constitute natural time limits is exceedingly determined by the history of a few Western countries. Certainly, in the Russian world or in Hellenic Anatolia, the calendar, even the macro political one, was not the same as in France or Germany. The presence of people from the Aegean islands among the characters in this dissertation should serve as a humbling reminder. We need to account for the diversity of shifts and rhythms faced by the historical agents, even when it related to the macro context of their land of origin. On a similar note, belonging nominally to one of the belligerent powers did not necessarily mean that the war experience entailed the same level of individual changes, as this thesis will demonstrate.¹²⁴

The case for more reflexivity and analytical non-conformism is a powerful one. The last traits of migration history that need to be analysed are its focus on particular levels of analysis, and its preference for certain types of source material. These traditions have also participated in concealing important aspects of migrant lives.

¹²³ This is particularly visible for earlier periods. See Sarah Maza, *Private Lives and Public Affairs: The Causes Célèbres of Prerevolutionary France*, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1993; David Cressy, *Agnes Bowker's Cat: Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England*, Oxford, New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 2000; Maurizio Gribaudi, *Paris, ville ouvrière. Une histoire occultée (1789-1848)*, Paris: La Découverte, 2014.

¹²⁴ See below, chapter 4.

Classic scale and source selections

For a long time, microhistorical approaches, whose early success in the 1970s and 1980s came from their capacity to highlight “the individuality of persons... as agents of historical change,”¹²⁵ had been neglected by scholars dealing with modern migration history. First, there were theoretical reasons for this. For one thing, many migration specialists initially mistook this new set of methods for a *pis aller*. For all the new approaches ushered in by the cultural turn and its post-structuralist emphasis on discourse and meaning, to many a scholar the legitimacy of micro-analysis seemed confined to situations where sources to write history at the presumably “normal” scale, i.e. the macro level, were missing. This amounted to disregard the virtues of microhistory as an alternative process of meaning production.¹²⁶ Whereas in fact, through and beyond singularity, the micro focus always aims at explaining cultures. The thickness of its descriptions –to paraphrase the hackneyed, yet still illuminating, expression of Clifford Geertz– is more than a fig leaf for a presumed absence of statistical or other macro records.¹²⁷

Another, similar theoretical misunderstanding also took hold at the time of the above-mentioned transnational turn. Global, connected, or shared histories appeared to call for bigger scales, not smaller ones. Arjun Appadurai’s concept of “multi-scalar scapes,” despite its popularity in theorizing globalisation, had little empirical echo in local settings among either sociologists or historians.¹²⁸ As if the local and the global

¹²⁵ Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, Middletown (CT): Wesleyan University Press, 2005, 112.

¹²⁶ Francesca Trivellato, “Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory,” *French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol. 33 (2015), No. 1, 122–34.

¹²⁷ Jean-Claude Passeron, Jacques Revel (eds.), *Penser par cas*, Paris: Éditions de l’EHESS, 2005.

¹²⁸ Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

were not always entangled in a mix of idiosyncrasies and connections, few researchers tried to engage in micro-transnational history.¹²⁹

The second range of explanations to the deficit of micro-analysis in migration history was political and ideological. Since the 1960s, the torchbearers of migration history, themselves often the descendants of immigrants, had shared the emancipatory, countercultural preoccupations of the New Social History, whose core agenda consisted in “historicising ordinary people.”¹³⁰ In that sense, these scholars were less concerned with individual experiences than with the big historical picture, and its perceived unfairness towards immigrants in general, or particular ethnic groups. To prop up their claims for ethnic legitimacy, quantitative methods and overarching narratives appeared more attractive than individual itineraries, deemed intrinsically inconclusive, and hence politically weaker.

The problem is that those institutions-first approaches to migration, though not illegitimate, have proven prone to dangerous leanings to the essentialist conception of ethnicity. Contrary to what prevails for most microhistorical efforts, when large scales and broad categories are selected by historians, the validity of such choices is rarely questioned –which can eventually riddle otherwise valuable works with major intellectual limitations.¹³¹

¹²⁹ See Angelika Epple, “Lokalität...,” *art. cit.* For a successful attempt at intertwining micro and macro levels in the context of Atlantic history, see Roquinaldo Ferreira, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World: Angola and Brazil during the Era of the Slave Trade*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹³⁰ Paul E. Johnson, “Reflections: Looking Back at Social History,” *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 39 (2011), No. 2, 380.

¹³¹ For example, Alison Clark Efford, in *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, never discusses what “German immigrant” means, or what a “German-American” is. Madeline Y. Hsu, in *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*, Princeton (NJ), Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015, does not explain what she means by the Chinese and the Asian-American communities.

Over the last decades though, progressive scholars have realised that stressing the agency of individuals could in fact wield some political influence, by debunking capitalist and nationalist teleologies.¹³² The study of individual trajectories became one of the available strategies that could help avoid, or at least control for, the perils of taking ethnic, national, racial or gender groupness for granted, and to measure their respective relevance.¹³³ More researchers are now aware that micro-analysis can, through its emphasis on agency and singularity, help them answer the postmodern call for contingency –that is, as much as possible without completely forgoing all epistemological pretensions of history as we know it.¹³⁴

Furthermore, scholars came to realise that there was no theoretical nor technical hindrance to using serial data and network theories at micro-level, as suggested by socio-economic historians with a quantitative focus,¹³⁵ and outside of history, by students of violent conflict.¹³⁶ Maurizio Gribaudi and Paul-André Rosental have spearheaded convincing efforts in that direction, complemented by promising attempts at quantitative prosopography.¹³⁷

While less seasoned historians have also tried to work on integration issues from a microhistorical point of view, their comparative approach clearly signalled their desire

¹³² Brad S. Gregory, “Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and The History of Everyday Life,” *History and Theory*, Vol. 38 (1999), No. 1, 101–2.

¹³³ See for instance Claire Zalc, Nicolas Mariot, *Face à la persécution: 991 Juifs dans la guerre*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010.

¹³⁴ Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, “Beyond ‘Identity’,” *art. cit.*

¹³⁵ A project led by Harvard University’s Centre for history and economics under the impulse of Emma Rothschild on 18th-century Angoulême seems to confirm this. Graphic representations of interpersonal connections reveal family ties across the ocean and make it possible to visualise an entire connected community (Emma Rothschild, “Isolation and Economic Life in Eighteenth-Century France,” *American Historical Review*, Vol. 119 (2014), No. 4, 1055–82. See also the graphic representations on the project’s [website](#) (last accessed January 26, 2018).

¹³⁶ Patricia Justino, Brück Tilman, Philip Verwimp (eds.), *A Micro-Level Perspective on the Dynamics of Conflict, Violence, and Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

¹³⁷ Maurizio Gribaudi, *Itinéraires ouvriers. Espaces et groupes sociaux à Turin au début du XX^e siècle*, Paris: Éd. de l’EHESS, 1987; Paul-André Rosental, *Les Sentiers invisibles*, *op. cit.*; Christophe Charle, “Prosopography (collective biography),” *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, Vol. 18, 12236–41.

to quickly extrapolate their typology at higher levels –as though they were embarrassed by the representativeness issue which is central to microhistory.¹³⁸ In recent years, it is a fact that the most groundbreaking experiments in migration history have not descended as far as the micro level.¹³⁹ But with a renewed interest in microhistory burgeoning across topics and periods, more historians of migration may take notice and try their luck at the microscope.¹⁴⁰

Another set of obstacles help explain why migration historians, for so long, would be wary of going micro. Those hurdles were practical and methodological. The first attempts at microhistory had mostly been based on serendipitous discoveries of troves of documents –judicial records, diaries, correspondences– containing unusually rich information about one individual, one family, or one community.¹⁴¹ In the early decades, it looked all but unfeasible to embark on a microhistorical project without having found the source beforehand, in migration history just as elsewhere. This is the

¹³⁸ See e.g. Lillooet Nordlinger McDonnell, “In the Company of Gentiles: Exploring the History of Integrated Jews in British Columbia, 1858-1971,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Ottawa, 2011. On microhistory and representativeness, see David Warren Sabean, “Reflections on Microhistory,” in Gunilla Budde, Sebastian Conrad, Oliver Janz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte: Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, 282.

¹³⁹ Michael Esch’s successful work on various immigrant neighbourhoods of Paris at the turn of the 20th century, despite being invaluable in its care not to take ethnicity for granted, stayed at meso level. Michael Esch, *Parallele Gesellschaften und soziale Räume. Osteuropäische Einwanderer in Paris, 1880-1940*, Frankfurt-am-Main, New York (NY): Campus Verlag, 2012.

¹⁴⁰ In addition to the already referenced symposium “Microhistoire et pratiques historiennes. Échelles, acteurs, formes narratives,” held at the University of Paris-Est in Marne-la-Vallée on 11.05.2012, recent years have seen other gatherings concerned with microhistory: “Changer d’échelle pour renouveler l’histoire de la Shoah: approches monographiques et prosopographiques” (École normale supérieure, Paris, 9-10.06.2011); “Changer d’échelle pour renouveler l’histoire de la Shoah/Changing Scale: Exploring the Micro History of the Holocaust” (École normale supérieure, Paris, 5-7.12.2012); “Microhistoire et monographie” (Institut national d’histoire de l’art, Paris, 13.06.2013); “Egodocuments et pratiques socioculturelles, XVI^e-XIX^e siècles” (University of Lausanne, 14-16.11.2013); “New Directions in Microhistory” (Renaissance Society of America, Berlin, 26-28.03.2015); “Temps et espaces: perspectives sur les échelles d’étude du passé” (University of Montreal, 30.03.2016-01.04.2016); “The Future(s) of Microhistory” (University of Rochester (NY), 17-18.11.2017).

¹⁴¹ Discoveries of judicial proceedings were the basis of Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* (Baltimore (MD): Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), Le Roy Ladurie’s *Montaillou* (London: Scholar, 1978) and Giovanni Levi’s *Inheriting Power* (Chicago (IL): University of Chicago Press, 1988). On this point, see Giovanni Levi, “On Microhistory,” in Peter Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2nd ed., 2001, 97–8.

main reason why Louis-François Pinagot has had only few peers, to this day, in the migrant world.¹⁴² This dissertation intends to show that a “microhistory from scratch,” so to speak, is now within the realm of possibility.

Things have slowly started to change on this methodological front as well. In America, pioneering oral history projects, gathering individual stories from migrants, have been launched, completed, and emulated.¹⁴³ Initiatives to retrieve private papers and correspondences from emigrants have also reached some degree of success, although none, thus far, has focused on non-Atlantic migrations.¹⁴⁴ New digital tools and databases, expanding continuously since the early 2000s, have made it easier to

¹⁴² Alain Corbin, *Le Monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot. Sur les traces d'un inconnu (1798-1876)*, Paris: Flammarion, 1998. The rare examples of research with a focus on migrant individuals include: Franco Ramella, “Biografia di un operaio antifascista: ipotesi per una storia sociale dell'emigrazione politica,” in *Publications de l'École française de Rome*, Vol. 94 (1986), No. 1, 385–406; Jeffrey Green, “John Alcindor (1873–1924): A Migrant’s Biography,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 6 (1987), No. 2, 174–89; Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca’s Revival: Creating Black Christianity in the Atlantic World*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2006; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim between Worlds*, New York (NY): Hill and Wang, 2006; Randy J. Sparks, *The Two Princes of Calabar: An Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Odyssey*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2009; Tonio Andrade, “A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Toward a Global Microhistory,” *The Journal of World History*, Vol. 4 (2010), 573–91; Emma Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empires: An Eighteenth-Century History*, Princeton (NJ), Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011; John-Paul A. Ghobrial, “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory,” *Past & Present*, Vol. 222 (2014), No. 1, 51–93. See also the pioneering documentary film *Album de famille*, by the Swiss director Fernand Melgar (1993).

¹⁴³ Early examples include Bruce M. Stave, John F. Sutherland (with Aldo Salerno), *From the Old Country: An Oral History of European Migration to America*, Lebanon (NH): University Press of New England, 1999; Myrna Katz Frommer, Harvey Frommer (eds.), *Growing Up Jewish in America: An Oral History*, Lincoln (NE): University of Nebraska Press, 1999.

¹⁴⁴ We can think, for instance, of the collection that was initially called the *Bochumer Auswandererbriefsammlung* (BABS), set up in the 1980s, and now stored in Gotha, Thüringen. This *Nordamerika-Auswandererbriefsammlung* (NABS), which contains thousands of letters from German migrants living in North America, was copied on microfilms in 1998 by the Library of Congress (40 reels). The publications edited by Wolfgang Helbich and Walter Kamphoefner based on this material are an exemplary initiative that has been commended but not emulated on a comparable scale by their fellow European migration researchers (see e.g. Wolfgang Helbich, Walter D. Kamphoefner, Ulrike Sommer (eds.), *Briefe aus Amerika, Deutsche Auswanderer schreiben aus der Neuen Welt, 1830-1930*, Munich: Beck, 1988). The most significant ongoing initiative is the collaborative digitisation and transcription of letters sent and received by migrants in the United States, a project initiated in 2008 by the Immigration History Research Centre of the University of Minnesota under the leadership of Sonia Cancian and Donna Gabaccia (see i.a. Sonia Cancian, Simone Wegge, “Exploring the Digitizing Immigrant Letters Project as a Teaching Tool,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 33 (2014), No. 4, 34–40).

track particular people in the sources, leading to a significant rethinking of the historians' toolkit. As a result, prominent migration historians have begun to show a fresh interest for particular, individual stories, which echoed parallel projects carried out by anthropologists of migration.¹⁴⁵

Paradoxically, more traditional sites of excavation have surprisingly been left aside by migration specialists. In particular, judicial and police records, an all-important source when it comes to reconstructing the past of those who did not leave direct traces, have not received the scrutiny they deserve.¹⁴⁶ In Paris, the unparalleled collection of "analytical registers," completed by the police every night in each neighbourhood, is a mine of information that has yet to be systematically exploited.¹⁴⁷ It was not until the 2010s that these registers became familiar to migration scholars, and for now, they have not been employed in micro-historical projects around particular families and individuals.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Lara Putnam, *The Company They Kept: Migrants and the Politics of Gender in Caribbean Costa Rica, 1870-1960*, Chapel Hill (NC): University of North Carolina Press, 2002; Rebecca J. Scott, Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2012; Sydney Nathans, *To Free a Family: The Journey of Mary Walker*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2012. For an example of micro-ethnography of migration, see Karen Fog Olwig, *Caribbean Journeys: An Ethnography of Migration and Home in Three Family Networks*, Durham (NC), London: Duke University Press, 2007.

¹⁴⁶ Arlette Farge, "Les archives du singulier. Quelques réflexions à propos des archives judiciaires comme matériau de l'histoire sociale," in Christophe Charle, *Histoire sociale, histoire globale*, Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1993, 183–9.

¹⁴⁷ Jean-Claude Farcy, "Archives policières: les répertoires des procès-verbaux des commissariats parisiens," *Recherches contemporaines*, 1998, No. 5, 5–44. These documents have attracted an increasing attention in the past three decades: see Emmanuelle Cronier, "Les permissionnaires à Paris pendant la Grande Guerre," master's thesis in history, University of Paris I, 1993; Régis Foubert, "Les missions de la police municipale parisienne à l'époque de la Grande Guerre (1913-1920)," master's thesis in history, University of Amiens, 1995; Christèle Lairy, "Le suicide à Paris (1895-1900)," master's thesis in history, University of Paris I, 1995; Pierre Miquel, *La Main courante: les archives indiscrètes de la police parisienne, 1900-1945*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1997. Between 2002 and 2012, a series of master's theses supervised by Paris I professors on the German occupation were explicitly based on the registers (see bibliography, theses by David Waldman, Stéphanie Schoreisz, Camille Menager, Justine Genet, Aurélie Maunoury, Thomas Moreau, Jérémy Guyon).

¹⁴⁸ Neither Natacha Lillo, Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, Laurent Couder, nor Claire Zalc have exploited them in their theses, as opposed to more recent endeavours by Leslie Page Moch and Michael Esch. See Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'...", *op. cit.*; Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, *Les Italiens dans l'Est parisien*, *op. cit.*; Laurent Couder, "Les Immigrés italiens dans la région parisienne pendant les années 1920. Contribution à l'histoire du fait migratoire en France au XX^e

As far as judicial sources are concerned, cross references to judicial proceedings found in police records, military registers and the press, have mostly remained under the radar. Archives of local courts, such as the *Justices de paix*,* are only starting to be examined by migration historians, following a movement initiated by scholars in other fields of social and cultural history.¹⁴⁹ As for the entire collection of French naturalisation files, perfectly preserved since the mid-19th century, it was long considered impenetrable, despite its immense potential for quantitative and qualitative analysis.¹⁵⁰

Lastly, French historians have come to acknowledge the value of oral testimonies in order to “grasp the infra-ordinary.”¹⁵¹ And yet oral history is not as widely used by European migration historians as it is by their American colleagues.¹⁵² In France, the urgency of retrieving the memory of immigrants has lately stimulated inspiring

siècle,” doctoral diss. in history, I.E.P. Paris, 1987; Claire Zalc, “Immigrants et indépendants...,” *op. cit.*; Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs...*, *op. cit.*, 2012; Michael Esch, *Parallele Gesellschaften...*, *op. cit.*, 2012. Recent dissertations concerned with other categories of people such as deserters, or juvenile offenders also made use of the répertoires. See Emmanuelle Cronier, *Permissionnaires dans la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Belin, 2013; Olivier Golliard, “L’État républicain et ses délinquants: police et justice face à la ‘jeunesse irrégulière’ de la Seine durant la crise des années 1930,” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris IV, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ For a good example of use of these sources, see Anaïs Albert, “Consommation de masse et consommation de classe. Une histoire sociale et culturelle du cycle de vie des objets dans les classes populaires parisiennes (des années 1880 aux années 1920),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris I, 2014. On migration related issues, Thibaud Bechini, “La ville migrante. Systèmes constructifs et modes d’habiter dans l’espace euro-américain. Marseille-Buenos Aires (années 1860-années 1930),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris I, in preparation. In Saint-Denis, these archives had never been looked at since they had been deposited.

¹⁵⁰ Even historians of naturalisation themselves stopped short of delving into this formidable source, before Claire Zalc started remedying this deficit (with *Dénaturalisés*, *op. cit.*). Patrick Weil, in particular, claimed that it was impossible “d’accéder pratiquement à ces dossiers” (Patrick Weil, *Qu’est-ce qu’être Français?* *op. cit.*, 2002, 373), even though the files had been accessible for some time (Ségolène de Dainville-Barbiche, “Les archives du Sceau,” in *La Gazette des archives*, Nos. 160–1, 1993, 134).

¹⁵¹ Philippe Artières et Dominique Kalifa, “L’historien et les archives personnelles: pas à pas ?,” *Sociétés et Représentations*, No. 13 (2002), 8.

¹⁵² Alistair Thomson, “Moving Stories: Oral History and Migration Studies,” *Oral History*, Vol. 27 (1999), No. 1, 24–37.

projects.¹⁵³ But so far, few historians of migration in France have attempted to interweave oral and written histories of migration.¹⁵⁴

The choice of an unorthodox framework

From this diagnosis of unwarranted divisions in migration history stem most of the theoretical choices underpinning this thesis.

First, the existence and relevance of ethnic groups ought to be a question, not a starting point. This is why in this study, individuals are the sole axiomatic social units. Approached as a post-structuralist history from below, the construction of the object of study had to set the stage for both interaction and agency. The objective is indeed to assess the ebbs and flows of social and cultural structures within the migratory context, and reconstruct the agents' own networks and strategies.¹⁵⁵ To do so, we shall draw inspiration and methods from network studies, not only when it comes to the migrating process, but also in the society of arrival.¹⁵⁶ Here, networks will be examined

¹⁵³ See the joint effort, launched in 2012 by various academic and archival institutions, that led to interviews of former Nanterre inhabitants in the Oued Souf region in Algeria (Rosa Olmos, "Mémoire de l'immigration algérienne, Oued Souf (Algérie) – Hauts-de-Seine (France): Projet de collecte, conservation et traitement de sources orales," *Bulletin de l'AFAS*, No. 38 (2012), 16–7). The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration also funds archival initiatives, often in close cooperation with various non-profit organisations such as "Génériques," but so far with rather fragile methodological foundations (see e.g. CNHI, GIS Ipapic, "Collecter des témoignages ou récits de l'immigration: nouveaux fournisseurs, nouveaux usages, nouvelles compréhensions," proceedings of a seminar held in Bordeaux, on 26 April 2012, available on-line at http://www.ipapic.eu/IMG/pdf/GIS_CNHI_Bordeaux-2-3.pdf, last consulted 25 February 2017).

¹⁵⁴ Natacha Lillo, Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard and Laurent Couder did conduct interviews in their respective theses.

¹⁵⁵ On the debate between agency and structure in migration studies, see Ewa Morawska, "The Sociology and Historiography of Immigration," in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, Oxford, New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 1990, 187–238; Oliver Bakewell, "Some Reflections on Structure and Agency in Migration Theory, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*," Vol. 36 (2010), No. 10, 1689–1708.

¹⁵⁶ Italian scholars, in particular, have insisted on individual migration paths, highlighting how many social relationships were actually built in the destination context, rather than before the migration. See *Quaderni Storici*, Vol. 36 (2001), No. 106 (1), "Migrazioni"; Angiolina Arru, Daniela Luigia Caglioti, Franco Ramella (eds.), *Donne e uomini migranti: storie et geografie tra breve e lunga distanza*, Rome: Donzelli, 2008.

through the prism of interaction. While such a Goffmanian interest in the symbolic minutiae of the face-to-face has been imported into Parisian history before,¹⁵⁷ the anthropological meanings of those encounters have not yet been assessed against fundamentally micro-historical, contextual contingencies. In that sense, our study is indebted as much to the socio-ethnographic model of fine-grain observations offered by Young and Willmott, as to the ever-topical *Polish Peasant*.¹⁵⁸

As for transnationalism, time has come for migration historiography to start integrating an “horizontal” transnationalism to its geometries. That is to say, the one connecting migrants to each other, irrespective, at the outset, of national and ethnic lines that may or may not distinguish them depending on the circumstances. Attention to this second direction of transnationalism is very much needed to escape the essentialism of categories perpetuating the tyranny of ethnicity in migration contexts.¹⁵⁹ This is why internal and international migrants are not distinguished upfront in this research, as they might find themselves in more similar situations than we think. Similarly, as some scholars have rightly advised, foreigners and colonial subjects shall not be necessarily treated separately.¹⁶⁰ In addition, the classic approach to migration from the dominant standpoint of nationality and citizenship is displaced within a larger framework of identifications, in which the mutual interactions between migrants and public authorities are given a fair, yet not disproportionate place.

¹⁵⁷ Ervin Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*, New York (NY): Pantheon Books, 1967; *Id.*, *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order*, New York (NY): Basic Books, 1971; Quentin Deluermoz, “Usages de Goffman au XIX^e siècle : policiers en tenue, institutions et ordres sociaux à Paris,” *Carnets de bords*, No. 14 (2007), 33–42.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Young, Peter Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957; William Isaac Thomas, Florian Witold Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant*, *op. cit.*

¹⁵⁹ To paraphrase a title from Gérard Noiriel, *La Tyrannie du national. Le droit d’asile en Europe (1793-1993)*, Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1991.

¹⁶⁰ Nancy L. Green, Marie Poinot (eds.), *Histoire de l’immigration et question coloniale en France*, Paris: La Documentation française/CNHI, 2008. Some historians had engaged earlier with this connection. See e.g. Claude Malon, “Travailleurs étrangers et coloniaux au Havre (1880-1962),” in John Barzman, Éric Saunier (eds.), *Migrants dans une ville portuaire (XVI^e-XXI^e siècle)*, Rouen, Le Havre: Publications des universités de Rouen et du Havre, 2005, 43–58.

As far as the sources are concerned, this research attempts to make another epistemological point. Namely, it tries to prove that by combining archival records from public and private collections, oral interviews, and digitally accessible information, a copious amount of substance can now be retrieved starting from a few lines in a census record. Yet as abundant as a data harvest might be, it would obviously be utterly vain, if not for the interpretive purposes it is expected to serve. All the more so, since the new digital means of accessing information, because of the fragmented, insular way in which micro-data can be collected, certainly increases the risks of passing over context and correlations.

How and why did people migrate? How did categories of difference work? How did boundary-making processes change over time as people moved across space? The main questions of migration history are at the heart of this dissertation, despite its microhistorical focus.¹⁶¹ In order to answer them, we have to properly appreciate if geographic origin, gender, class and other criteria of difference had an effect on people's lives. This is why the cohort of subjects under scrutiny needed to include people from many walks of life.

To this end, a single housing unit appears as a perfect field of experiment. As the urban anthropologist Monique Selim once put it, observing migrant people within a tangible residential unit accommodating people of various origins is a way to prevent the investigation from being confined to "an illusory and artificially isolated" ethnic group.¹⁶² In other words, a building is a "topographical community," not dependent on

¹⁶¹ On the relationship between microhistory and great historical questions, see Charles Joyner, *Shared Traditions-Southern History and Folk Culture*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois, 1999, 1 ("asking large questions in small places"); Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?," *California Italian Studies*, Vol. 2 (2011), No. 1; Chuanfei Chin, "Margins and Monsters: How Some Micro Cases Lead To Macro Claims," *History and Theory*, Vol. 50 (2011), No. 3, 341–57.

¹⁶² Monique Selim, "Passe ethnologique: situations, confrontations, moments," *Journal des anthropologues*, Nos. 102-3 (2005), 20.

predefined ethno-national communities.¹⁶³ It substitutes an artificial and non-reflexive way of sampling people, with a similarly arbitrary, yet self-conscious, delineation, so as not to tamper, from the outset, with the issues under scrutiny.

Amazingly, the history of a building has rarely, if ever, been attempted by historians, as opposed to ethnographers and sociologists.¹⁶⁴ Some scattered stories are to be found in publications, whether historical or patrimonial, focusing on the neighbourhood level. Some of them were instrumental in revealing unsuspected patterns of interethnic friendship and coexistence; but overall, such studies have remained superficial.¹⁶⁵ An exception is Jerry White's unparalleled historical observation of Jewish immigrants in a London East End block, which provides an inspiring model of investigation, especially because of its use of oral history.¹⁶⁶ The indigence of academic history when it comes to residential units stands in stark

¹⁶³ Michael Esch, "Sozialmorphologie und Netzerkanalyse: Die Osteuropäische Einwanderung in Paris, 1895-1928," in Mareike König, *Deutsche Handwerker, Arbeiter und Dienstmädchen in Paris: eine vergessene Migration im 19. Jahrhundert*, Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003, 98.

¹⁶⁴ The "biography" published on the famous tenement of 97 Orchard Street, in New York, is essentially architectural, with only a few paragraphs on the inhabitants of the building that now hosts the Lower East Side Tenement museum. Andrew S. Dolkart, *Biography of A Tenement House in New York City: An Architectural History of 97 Orchard Street*, Santa Fe (NM): The Center for American Places, 2006 (see in particular 21, on the Moore family). From an example in urban planning, see Henri Coing, *Rénovation urbaine et changement social: l'îlot n° 4, Paris 13^e*, Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1966.

¹⁶⁵ Sean M. Fisher, Carolyn Hughes (eds.), *The Last Tenement: Confronting Community and Urban Renewal in Boston's West End*, Boston (MA): Bostonian Society, 1992 (exhibition catalogue); Kevin C. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life: An Oral History*, Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1994.

¹⁶⁶ Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East-End Tenement Block, 1887-1920*, London: Pimlico, 2003 (1st ed, 1980). For other examples of building histories, see Jean-Luc Pinol, *Les Mobilités de la grande ville*, *op. cit.* (based on ten buildings, one per neighbourhood); Claire Lévy-Vroelant, "Histoires d'immeubles et d'habitants: Versailles, 1831-1954," in Annie Fourcaut (ed.), *La Ville divisée. Les ségrégations urbaines en question, France XVIII^e-XX^e siècles*, proceedings of a symposium held on 27-28.01.1994, Paris: Créaphis, 1996, 363-75; Florence Bourillon, "Un immeuble dans Paris," *Cahiers d'histoire*, Vol. 44 (1999), No. 4, 701-15; John Foot, "Micro-history of a house: memory and place in a Milanese neighbourhood, 1890-2000," *Urban History*, 2007, 431-52; David Lepoutre, "Histoire d'un immeuble haussmannien. Catégories d'habitants et rapports d'habitation en milieu bourgeois," *Revue française de sociologie*, Vol. 51 (2010), No. 2, 321-58; Mahmoud Yazbak, Yfaat Weiss, "A Tale of Two Houses," in *Id.* (eds.), *Haifa Before & After 1948: Narratives of a Mixed City*, Dordrecht, St. Louis (MO): Institute for Historical Justice and Reconciliation, 2011, 11-42; Annick Lacroix, Muriel Cohen, "Écrire une histoire de l'Algérie au XX^e siècle au prisme d'un immeuble : sources et méthodes," paper given at an international symposium in Aix-en-Provence entitled "Propriété et société en Algérie contemporaine. Quelles approches?," 20-21.05.2014.

contrast not only to people engaged in memory-conservation efforts,¹⁶⁷ but to novelists and film directors, who have successfully developed a subgenre around buildings.¹⁶⁸ Even the scale of the street has only barely been explored by historians.¹⁶⁹ These past few years, however, a timid interest for building histories has been budding in Paris.¹⁷⁰ One historian listed the biography of a building, or of a street number, among his unfulfilled “dreams of history.”¹⁷¹ Another scholar devoted her cultural anthropology dissertation to a sociocultural biography of the Gare du Nord.¹⁷²

The choice of buildings in this thesis is not a random one. It has little to do with material and semiotic history, made difficult by the constructions’ almost entire levelling in the 1960s. The main reason behind that selection was the need for a

¹⁶⁷ See Jean-Pierre Le Crom, *Mémoire du camp. Souvenirs d’une cité ouvrière du XX^e siècle*, Les Ponts-de-Cé: Métiers graphiques, 1987; Henri Demay, *Il était une fois... : Beaublanc. Souvenirs d’un temps de guerre et d’amitiés (1938-1952) au cœur de la première cité ouvrière de Limoges*, Neuvic-Entier: Éditions de la Veytizou, 2005; Pierre-Jacques Derainne, Geneviève Michel, *Aux Courtillères: histoires singulières et exemplaires*, Paris: Créaphis, 2005 (based on oral interviews); Mission mémoires et identités en Val-de-France, *Les Carreaux, 1955-1963. Naissance d’un grand ensemble en banlieue parisienne*, Villiers-le-Bel: Communauté d’agglomération Val-de-France, 2006.

¹⁶⁸ See the works of fiction listed in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. Pérec’s famous *User’s Manual*, whose deconstructivist attention to architecture broke radically with the realistic tradition of 19th century literature, followed experimental analyses that he had previously carried out on everyday spaces and daily interactions (see Georges Pérec, *Espaces d’espaces*, Paris: Galilée, 1974; *Life: A User’s Manual*, Boston (MA): Godine, 1987, 1st ed. in French 1978).

¹⁶⁹ Patrick Gervaise, “Les Passages à Levallois-Perret. Quartier populaire, quartier de la ‘Zone’ (1826-1972),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Paris VII, 1986 (investigation of five different streets); Jerry White, *Campbell Bunk: The Worst Street in North London Between the Wars*, London: Pimlico, 2003; Pierre Fournier, Sylvie Mazzella (eds.), *Marseille, entre ville et ports. Les destins de la rue de la République*, Paris: La Découverte, 2004. See also Donna R. Gabaccia, *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street: Housing and Social Change Among Italian Immigrants, 1880-1930*, Albany (NY): SUNY Press, 1984; Pierre-André Rosental, “La rue mode d’emploi. Les univers sociaux d’une rue industrielle,” *Enquête. Anthropologie, histoire, sociologie*, No. 4 (1996), 123–43.

¹⁷⁰ A group of historians has launched a society which organises seminars on working-class housing, in order to eventually acquire a particular building and present its history, on the model of the Tenement Museum in New York (see Association pour un musée du logement populaire, AMuLoP, symposium held in Saint-Denis on 21.10.2016). The Paris Archives have for the first time offered a course for people eager to write their building’s history (Archives de Paris, cours d’initiation à la recherche, cycle “Histoire d’un immeuble,” 3.10.2017-13.03.2018).

¹⁷¹ Philippe Artières, *op. cit.*, 101 (see above, p. 13).

¹⁷² Julie O’Brien Kleinman, “Dangerous Encounters: Riots, Railways, and the Politics of Difference in French Public Space (1860–2012),” doctoral diss. in cultural anthropology, Harvard University, 2013.

suitable setting for our project of sociocultural ethnohistory.¹⁷³ A sufficient diversity in differentiation parameters was necessary for us to test their relevance over time. To the naked eye, census records were quick to show that the Plaine-Saint-Denis in general, and the buildings at Nos. 96-102 Av. de Paris in particular, provided ample measure of these variations, although to a lesser extent, perhaps, in terms of class and religion. Second, we sought for a building large enough for its inhabitants to have left a significant number of traces in the archives. Our belief in micro-quantitative approaches to supplement individual stories of residents also called for a demographic critical mass.¹⁷⁴ The sheer size and turnover rate visible in census records appeared to clear that bar as well.¹⁷⁵ Third, a preliminary full-text search of the addresses in digitised newspaper collections proved promising, by yielding mentions of residents in both national scandals –which in that sense made the buildings quite exceptional and augured richer-than-average sources– and a significant number of small events, an expected consequence of their demographic and sociological characteristics. The presence of a bar-hotel and other shops at the front of the tenement also looked like an auspicious feature for our historical ethnography project, as it heralded meeting spaces, go-between characters, and a wider array of social encounters than just neighbour-to-neighbour interactions.¹⁷⁶ Lastly, Saint-Denis stood out as a propitious field of investigation: its macro and meso histories had already been written in detailed form,

¹⁷³ The expression “sociocultural ethnohistory” is meant as a nod to the works of Richard Hoggart (*The Uses of Literacy*, Harmondsworth: Pelican 1958), Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie (*Montaillou, op. cit.*) and Roger Chartier (*Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993). “Setting” is to be understood here in a dynamic sense of something that evolves materially over time (on this point, see Philippe Bonin, “L’immeuble parisien et sa loge: seuils et rituels des espaces d’articulation,” in Ministère de la culture et de la communication, sous-direction de l’archéologie, ethnologie, inventaire et système d’information, Bernard Haumont, Alain Morel (eds.), *La Société des voisins. Partager un habitat collectif*, Paris: Éditions de la M.S.H., 2005, 237).

¹⁷⁴ In that sense, the choice of a residential unit as a framework of analysis also functions as an “oblique strategy” meant to articulate quantitative analysis and microhistory, as recommended by Carlo Ginzburg in “Microhistoire: modes d’emploi,” paper given at the symposium “Microhistoire et pratiques historiennes. Échelles, acteurs, formes narratives,” Marne-la-Vallée, 11.05.2012.

¹⁷⁵ See below, chapter 1.

¹⁷⁶ Sociologists working on architecture and social interactions see in such spaces an “*injonction à la rencontre et à la sociabilité*” (Monique Eleb, Jean-Louis Violeau, “Dispositifs architecturaux et mixité sociale,” in Marie-Christine Jaillet, Évelyne Perrin, François Ménard (eds.), *Diversité sociale, ségrégation urbaine, mixité*, Paris: PUCA, 2008, 95).

and the publicly available sources pertaining to its history were well kept, correctly structured, and increasingly digitised.¹⁷⁷

As in any microhistory, whether the social and cultural dynamics observable in this setting are representative or not shall remain an open question. Certainly, there were comparable buildings with comparable populations, in the Plaine-Saint-Denis and elsewhere. And yet this issue is not a direct concern of this research, the purpose of which is less comparative than analogical. Future studies may prove that some stories from this tenement had, in fact, run counter to the norm. Were it the case, it would certainly not be a problem from a microhistorical perspective. As Edoardo Grendi alluded to when he coined his famed oxymoron “the exceptional normal,” the anomaly is richer than the norm from a cognitive standpoint, for it gives access at once to the sociocultural standards and to their subversions.¹⁷⁸

A final remark must be made about the selected buildings, one that has to do with terminology. As will be shown in the first chapter, various topographic, taxonomical or metonymical designations were used by inhabitants and contemporary observers to refer to the place under scrutiny, first architecturally united until the mid 1900s, and then progressively separated in two, then three, distinct living spaces. One of the most common appellations, in French, for those working-class, largely anarchic housing ensembles comprising of vast courtyards and narrow passages between low constructions, was the term “*cité*.” Although the term acquired a different meaning in the context of the French banlieues after the erection of public housing complexes in the 1960s –nowadays it is more or less equivalent to the American “project”–, the untranslated version of “*cités*” shall be used in many parts of this thesis (the plural form referring to the progressive division of the plot). Whenever possible, however,

¹⁷⁷ The SDMA have been pioneer in digitising material from censuses, civil registries and other sources and providing access to them on the internet. By contrast, the AD93 were one of the trailing departmental archives in that respect, but were in the process of catching up as of late 2018.

¹⁷⁸ Edoardo Grendi, “Microanalisi e storia sociale,” *Quaderni Storici*, 1972, 33.

we have opted for the imperfect translation “tenement block,” or simply “tenement.” This other historic term refers to comparable realities in the U.S., Irish and Scottish contexts at the same period.¹⁷⁹ Such translation by analogy is warranted by the choice of other historians who have explicitly rendered “*cité*” by tenement in the French context.¹⁸⁰

Our time selection also results from different choices and constraints. First, it was meant to allow for 50 years of serial data, whether those would be extracted from censuses, civil registries or naturalisation records. The beginning of our period roughly corresponds to the time of the first detailed registers of population in Saint-Denis in the second half of the 19th century.¹⁸¹ Its final mark matches the most recent year of civil registers which were accessible at the time of our research, given the existing legal restrictions.

Second, as outlined above, the period had to go across the Great War in order to assess the extent to which the conflict had effectively been a moment of change for the residents and their identifications. Additionally, the inclusion of the 1920s was critical to the analysis of the residents’ naturalisations, the number of which swelled after the passing of the 1927 law.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City*, New York (NY): Columbia University Press, 2016; Kevin C. Kearns, *Dublin Tenement Life*, *op. cit.*; Frank Worsdall, *The Tenement: A Way of Life: A Social, Historical and Architectural Study of Housing in Glasgow*, Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1979.

¹⁸⁰ Alain Faure, “Local Life in Working-Class Paris at the end of the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 32 (2006), No. 5, 767 (transl. by David Garrioch): “the famous Cité Jeanne d’Arc, a rundown block of tenements in the 13th Arrondissement.” See for other examples Valérie Amiraux, Patrick Simon, “There are no Minorities Here: Cultures of Scholarship and Public Debate on Immigrants and Integration in France,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, Vol. 47 (2006), Nos. 3–4, 198; Eva Jørholt, “Banlieue Chronicles: A ‘Demigrantising’, Historical Look at Cinematic Representations of the Ill-Famed French suburbs,” *Studies in European Cinema*, Vol. 14 (2017), No. 3, 253.

¹⁸¹ Lists of populations do not exist between the 1803 and 1881 censuses. The latter, however, proved impossible to exploit with enough certainty, as it does not follow a regular order in the house numbers. See below, chapter 1.

¹⁸² See chapter 4.

A third element is partly related to macro, socio-economic considerations. The limits of that half-century saw sweeping changes in the Plaine, with the rapid industrialisation and swelling immigration in the early 1880s on one end, and the start of the Great Depression on the other. These transformations, which largely defined the history of the Third Republic, were certainly felt in the micro-context; many were the residents who first set foot in the Plaine in or around 1882, and many were those who had become unemployed by the end of 1932.¹⁸³ In addition, other important evolutions occurred at those two moments, with regard to transportation, hygiene, education and welfare.¹⁸⁴

But both time boundaries also refer to events that are more specific to the tenement block and its inhabitants.¹⁸⁵ 1882 is the year in which civic numbers on the Avenue de Paris were modified: it is hence the official date of birth of Nos. 96, 98, 100 and 102.¹⁸⁶ 1932 was also a pivotal year in the cités. It is at that date that residents from Southern Europe enlisted for the first time in the main benefit society of the Plaine, an important sign of their integration. It is also in 1932 that Louis Pirolli, the protagonist of our second chapter and hitherto one of the most successful and well-regarded of the tenement's occupants, lost his managing job at the glass factory over a misappropriation of the company's funds. His pristine reputation was consequently tarnished, highlighting the precariousness of those same integration trajectories.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ See below, chapter 1, note 246, and chapter 2, note 23.

¹⁸⁴ See below, chapters 1 and 4.

¹⁸⁵ Here we emulate other microhistorians who have framed their study according to the temporalities of their subjects. See for instance Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period*, New Haven (CT), London: Yale University Press, 2009.

¹⁸⁶ See chapter 1, note 20.

¹⁸⁷ SDMA, 5Q61, Société de secours "la Mutualité" de la Plaine Saint-Denis; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 26/5, Real Patronato español de Santa Teresa de Jesús, baptisms, vol. 2, 1932, No. 71: 26.06.1932, cérémonies suppléées, pour Helena García López; APP, CB 92.28, 1932/2095, 1.05.1932; FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis Pirolli.

Finally, this thesis is also the product of choices in the sources used, and options taken in the rendition of its findings. On the archival side, it results from research undertaken in France, Spain and Italy. In order to collect as much data as possible about the occupants of the tenement block, we thoroughly examined 300 volumes of birth, marriage and death registries, mostly at the Seine-Saint-Denis departmental archives and Saint-Denis municipal archives. This was supplemented by an exhaustive examination of marriage and baptism records kept at Saint-Denis parish archives (which have missing years). For four regions of origin of the tenants –Alsace-Lorraine, Caserta-Campobasso, Burgos, and Cáceres–, we also hunted for civil and religious records. At the time of our research, only a fraction of these records had been digitised, and more importantly, nowhere were these manuscript documents searchable through full-text queries. Once this technology will be available for this type of records, research by street number will become much easier, and hopefully more appealing to historians.

Seeking both context and precise information about the tenement and its residents, we also explored about 150 boxes of municipal archives, mostly in Saint-Denis. In addition, we unearthed precious information about the buildings' evolution and the financial situation of the residents thanks to a plunge into the depths of fiscal archives. Those indirectly allowed us to track down notary records, which we were then able to consult in public archives or obtain from notary offices. Diplomatic correspondence on high-profile scandals happening in the tenement yielded precious material as well. The most fruitful trails of all, however, were those leading to about 370 naturalisation files and over a thousand police registers, judicial files and military transcripts. As with civil registries, we investigated those sources as methodically and comprehensively as possible, either by looking at every single document pertaining to the period (for the archives of the local police station, the *Justice de paix** and the gendarmerie), or by checking all the residents' names in individual collections (for naturalisation and military files) and trying to track down as many as possible. To our

knowledge, such sources had never been used before, either separately or in combination, to document the lives of particular individuals.

Possibilities of full-text digital search in vast newspaper collections proved of great help too. From the outset, various episodes emerged through that type of search and confirmed the investigation's potential. Later on, we used newspapers as an important source for periods at which other sources were absent –before 1905, for instance, analytical registers of the Plaine police station are missing, and the existing transcripts of arrests and audition are incomplete. When they could be combined with other accounts, press records also helped us understand the discrepancy between the public narrative on the *faits divers*, influenced by the rhetoric prevailing at the macro level, and what actually happened to the inhabitants and their peers.¹⁸⁸

Lastly, we set off on a patient research of the residents' descendants. Aside from the eight censuses conducted over the selected period, we sifted through seven more, down to 1975, with a view to identifying the former residents' children and grandchildren. Little-known fiscal documents, like the individual cards of the "Répertoire général de l'enregistrement," also contain information dating to the 1970s. They proved valuable for locating the residents' descendants, as did marginal mentions on civil and religious registries. Another powerful instrument in that respect is the rapidly growing field of genealogy databases. We subscribed to several ones over the course of our research.

As a result, we ended up sending out 396 physical letters through the mail, along with 53 e-mails to people we suspected could be connected to the characters in this

¹⁸⁸ In addition to searchable newspapers and in a more traditional vein, we sifted through every single issue of the *Journal de Saint-Denis* between 1889 and 1919, a local conservative paper which is not searchable in full-text mode. We performed both sample and targeted searches in that same publication after that date, and also in other newspapers such as *Le Réveil des verriers* (1892), *L'Éclaireur* (1896), *Le Réveil de Saint-Denis* (after 1901), *L'Émancipation* (1902), *Le Petit démocrate de Saint-Denis et de la Région* (from 1912). For more references, see the list of primary printed sources in the bibliography.

thesis.¹⁸⁹ That way, we were able to collect 75 testimonies of direct descendants, now scattered across five countries.¹⁹⁰ Those indirect recollections need to be handled with caution, especially for the majority of families who have not kept private documents from that period. And yet the bits of information retrieved were often the only access to several aspects of the migrants' life conditions (language, religion, politics, food, etc.) and their personal experience of major episodes of their lives.

As for the rendition of the argument, we hope that a combination of diagrams, maps and photographs, and above all an accent on the narrative, will bring as much clarity to the demonstration as vividness to the stories.¹⁹¹ Readers will also be able to consult some innovative digital material in support of the thesis.¹⁹² Lastly, "some who are not fans of microhistory," as one historian put it, "might be uncomfortable with the 'must haves,' 'might haves' and 'could haves' that necessarily pepper the text."¹⁹³ Here, those have been kept to a minimum.

The thesis is structured as follows. The notion of place is the common theme of the first two chapters. The tenement itself are at the core of the first one. Both the buildings and their demographic make-up, far from being mere micro-structural conditions, appear as fluid realities whose delineations depend not only upon the residents'

¹⁸⁹ By contrast, we elected to make only sparing use of social media platforms (like LinkedIn and Facebook), on account of the age range of the descendants we were looking for.

¹⁹⁰ See the table of interviews at the end of this thesis. The overwhelming majority of the interviewees were most happy to share their memories and private documents, and also comment on the information we presented them about the buildings and their forebears. All people listed in the table of interviews and quoted in this thesis have explicitly agreed that their name be mentioned. Only the names of the handful of people who refused have been left out.

¹⁹¹ See Jacques Revel, "L'histoire au ras du sol," in Giovanni Levi, *op. cit.*, xvi-xviii.

¹⁹² See the website paris-tenement.eu, using Google Chrome (this is imperative). Two types of documents are available. First, an interactive, global map highlighting the exact birth places of residents at census years. Second, a few of the databases we compiled over the course of our research (login: "Paris" / password: "tenement"). As of the completion of this thesis, we are still exploring the legal feasibility to keep the map and the databases on-line in the long run (given the sensitive information they contain), or else to entrust them to a repository managed by the University of Cambridge or an archival institution.

¹⁹³ Sharon Block, "The Hanging of Ephraim Wheeler: A Story of Rape, Incest, and Justice in Early America (review)," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 38 (2004), No. 2, 545.

perceptions, but also upon our analytical choices (1). The second chapter investigates the migrations of the tenement occupants, demonstrating that the salience of categories of difference depended partly on spatial movements (2). These categories were also influenced by interactions, which are the focus of the second part of the dissertation. Personal interactions are addressed in the third chapter, through a focus on the residents' intricate, and ever-evolving, networks. When identifications based on geographic origin had a certain relevance in people's affinities, local and micro-regional solidarity was generally more meaningful than a broadly conceived ethnicity. As for antagonisms, they were often less contingent upon origin than upon other variables (3). Finally, the fourth chapter addresses the extent to which public institutions participated in the construction of difference, and how in turn the inhabitants of the cités negotiated and altered the logics of national identifications (4).

PART I

CHANGING PLACES

CHAPTER 1

Interactive settings: the configurations of people's experiences

In the early 1860s, Louise Versigny and her sister decided to rent a small house, in the corner of a bare plot of farmland just outside Paris. It was located on the right-hand side, going north, of the millennium-old road connecting the capital to Saint-Denis through the vast and level Plaine de France. The swathe of territory immediately surrounding that “route de Paris” had just been absorbed by the city of Saint-Denis, thereby starting its official existence as the “Plaine-Saint-Denis.”

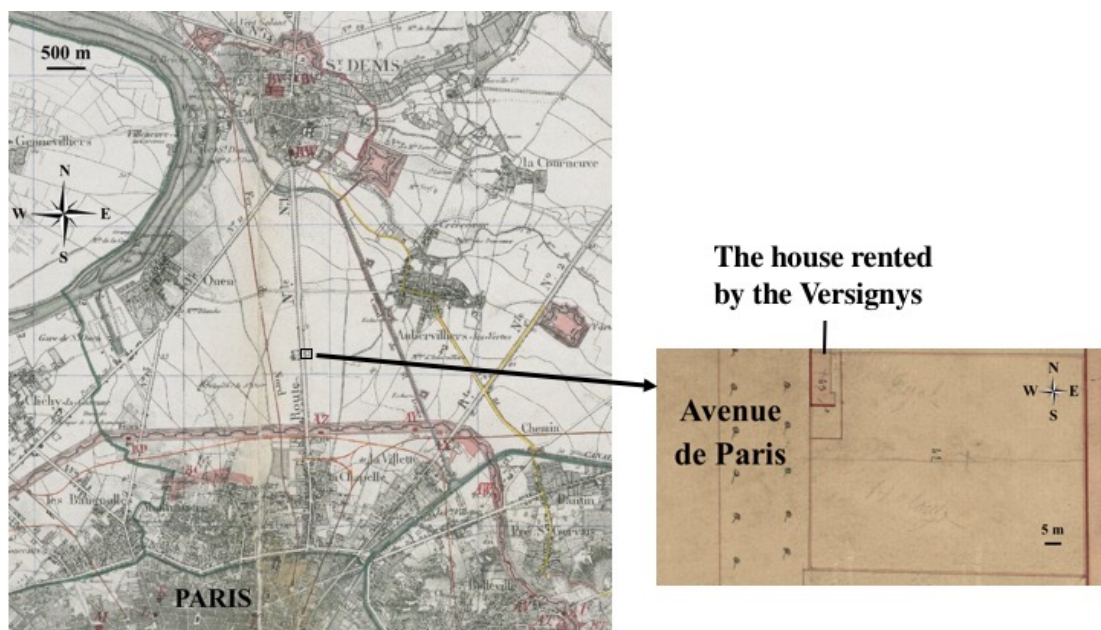


Figure 1: The location of the Versignys' new house in the Plaine-Saint-Denis in the early 1860s¹

¹ The annexation of the Plaine by Saint-Denis was completed by 1859, while the villages south of the fortifications (La Villette, La Chapelle, Montmartre...) were integrated into Paris in 1860. The expression “plaine Saint-Denis” had been in use for a long time before becoming an administrative reality (see e.g. *Mercure galant*, April 1695, 239).

The setting around the house was still overwhelmingly rural. On all sides, fields alternated with grasslands and gardens. On the Versignys' one-acre plot, where milk cows had been seen grazing for years, a strip was even covered with marsh. Water had to be fetched from stone wells.² This was before the road was paved and lit; before horse-drawn tramways came that far north; before trains from Paris made a stop in the neighbourhood.³ The landscape had not changed much since it had been painted by Georges Michel a couple of decades earlier.



Figure 2: Georges Michel, “*La Plaine Saint-Denis*,” (1830s-1840s)

² Bernard Bastien, “Saint-Denis: évolution urbaine, évolution du mode de vie et de la sociabilité populaire,” doctoral diss. in geography, University of Paris VII, 1984, 43; AD93, 2E7 300, Minutes notariales, Étude de Me Leclerc, août-octobre 1862, 12.07.1862, Vente Cottret-Blanchard; “Acte sous seings privés du 23.02.1864, entre Mlle Louise Adélaïde Versigny et M. Étienne Saudet,” reproduced in FNA, MC/ET/XXXVIII/1224, Minutes de Me Gamard, “Cahier des charges pour parvenir à la vente d’un droit au bail de terrains sis à Saint-Denis, av. de Paris 96, et des constructions édifiées sur ces terrains,” 12.10.1883; SDMA, E179, Saint-Denis, 1865, deaths, No. 542, 18.06.1865, Louise Adélaïde Versigny; AD93, 4Q5, vol. 4994, acte 12, 1.09.1880, Sale by M. Alphonse Louis Trézel and Mme Marie Louise Halouze his wife to Mlle Louise Philippine Versigny. One stone well was still in use in the early 1880s (see below, figure 14).

³ Pierre Douzenel, *À Saint-Denis, les rues aussi ont leur histoire*, Vol. III, Saint-Denis: Douzenel, 1981–90, 846; Nicholas Papayannis, *Horse-Drawn Cabs and Omnibuses in Paris: The Idea of Circulation and the Business of Public Transit*, Baton Rouge (LA): Louisiana State University Press, 1996. See also below, note 84.

At least the route de Paris had already, on each side, a double row of plane trees. This soon prompted its new appellation as “Avenue de Paris,” and provided the foundation for a grandiose elegance that would impress visitors for decades to come. “*C’était une très belle avenue, un peu comme les Champs-Élysées,*” a resident would recall many decades later.⁴

But cattle, alfalfa and lettuce were not the only sights on the horizon. Due to the ideal geographic position of the Plaine just outside the capital, and its propitious natural characteristics –flat lands protected from flood waters, chalky terrain able to withstand heavy constructions, abundant underground water–, industry had started burgeoning since the 1820s, when the local canal had been inaugurated. And yet under the Second Empire, the few companies present in the Plaine were still small in size, and warehouses more common than workshops.⁵ Across the Avenue from the Versignys’, a glass factory had recently been founded. It employed only a few workers, recognisable by the factory’s name embroidered on their caps.⁶ The Plaine was still semi-desert.

Things would be different a few years hence. After her sibling passed away in 1865, Louise, who inherited the leases, realised that dwellings were a rare commodity in the area, at a time of increased traffic and surging demography. This persuaded her, like

⁴ Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016. Details about interviews and interviewees are to be found in the bibliography, and also at www.paris-tenement.eu (login: “Paris” / password: “tenement”), additional data, “Table of interviews.” Another resident went further: “*L’avenue [Wilson], c’était mieux que les Champs-Élysées*” (Int. Hohloh née Ricci, No. 44, 23.04.2016).

⁵ The Magasins généraux, a company offering warehousing facilities across Aubervilliers and Saint-Denis and which would become the biggest one in the Paris area, was founded in 1862. In 1872, there were only 19 companies in the Plaine-Saint-Denis and Aubervilliers, of which 16 in chemical products and leather. See Sylvaine Oger, “L’Aménagement urbain d’Aubervilliers,” master’s thesis in geography, University of Paris, 1969, 4–5; *Évolution de la géographie industrielle de Paris et sa proche banlieue au XIX^e siècle*, vol. II: *Vers la maturité de l’industrie parisienne, 1872-1914*, Centre de documentation et d’histoire des techniques, 1976, 463–5.

⁶ *La Céramique et la verrerie. Journal de la Chambre syndicale*, 1-15.03.1893, 1893, 1376–9; *Bulletin de la Société de protection des apprentis et des enfants des manufactures*, 1867, 264. The glass factory was founded in 1859. M. Legras was recruited as head of manufacturing in 1864, became director the next year, and assumed ownership in 1866.

later some of her tenants themselves, to offer cheap lodgings for rent.⁷ That decision marked the date of birth of the tenement.

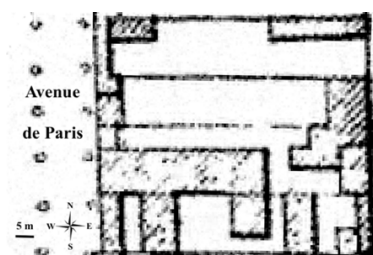


Figure 3: A plan of the plot in the 1870s⁸

When Louise eventually left for Paris, at the end of the century, investing in a tenement building had become mainstream.⁹ The one she owned had earned her a sizable fortune.¹⁰ It was described as follows: “*un grand immeuble clos de murs, situé à la Plaine Saint-Denis, commune de Saint-Denis, avenue de Paris, numéros 96, 98,*

⁷ SDMA, 1G86, Matrices des contributions personnelles, mobilières et des patentes, 1865, 55. A 41-year-old single who would never marry, Louise Versigny was the youngest of four children of a roofer from Seine-et-Marne. He had accumulated enough money to buy property, towards the end of his life, both in his native village and in La Chapelle (“Fiche individuelle de Louis Laurent Versigny,” private collection of Mme Gillot; Int. Gillot, No. 23, 31.01.2016).

⁸ The longest construction in the middle of the plot was a *buanderie* (laundry shop) opened in 1863 (see SDMA, 25 Fi 150, CT1204/9, Enquête de commodo et d’incommodo 19.03.1863, M. Dufany). In 1868, the buildings and walls in the cités were made of plasterboard and covered with zinc roofs (see *Affiches parisiennes et départementales*, Vol. 51, No. 18438, 10.10.1868, listing No. 18135).

⁹ A guidebook recommended in 1908 to those who wished to settle in the northern banlieue: “*Un bon conseil: dans cette région si fréquentée, c’est une excellente combinaison que de faire élever une maison de rapport, en s’y ménageant son propre logis: ce qui est encore le meilleur moyen de placer ses capitaux et d’en ‘surveiller’ sur place les revenus.*” Marius Tranchant, *L’Habitation du parisien en banlieue*, Paris: M. Tranchant, 1908, 92. (“A good advice: in this populous area, it is an excellent combination to have a tenement erected and put aside one lodging for oneself: this is the best way to invest one’s capital and to ‘monitor’ its returns on the spot.”)

¹⁰ In the late 1890s, the property generated more than 16,350 fr. a year (AD93, DP 697, Matrices cadastrales des propriétés bâties, 1900, No. 2101, 2181, Av. de Paris 96-98, 100-102). Louise Versigny died in 1901 with more than 220,000 francs in assets, the equivalent of more than 700,000 of 2017 euros, according to Insee conversion tables (AVP, DQ7 30677, Déclaration de succession du 14.04.1902, No. 610, 6e bureau, Louise Philippine Versigny).

*100 et 102, de forme à peu près rectangulaire, d'une contenance totale superficielle de 3827 mètres environ, d'un seul ensemble.”*¹¹

This particular property provided a set of evolving spatial and material conditions, which influenced the lives of its migrant inhabitants. More than just a space, the constructions, staircases, porches, courtyards, and gardens constituted a sort of interactive “biotope” –in other words, a place.¹² As such, it constantly evolved in interdependence with the experiences of its residents, who were “never rats in a housing maze.”¹³

The point in this first chapter is to understand how the buildings’ life as “inhabited things” intersected with the residents’ representations about themselves, others and their material surroundings.¹⁴ The classic boundary between objective and subjective dimensions of a lived building is not so clear-cut: humanist geographers have highlighted how places are above all mental constructs,¹⁵ while anthropologists have

¹¹ AD77, 214E461, Dammartin-en-Goële II, Minutes de Me Fauvel, 06.1897-09.1897, folder “16 juillet 1897. Bail à loyer par Mademoiselle Versigny à M. Replumaz.” (“A large property encircled by walls, located in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, town of Saint-Denis, avenue de Paris, No. 96, 98, 100 and 102, of a more or less rectangular shape, with an area of approximately 3827 square meters, in one plot”).

¹² In use in biological sciences, where it refers in its most recent acceptation to both to the habitat and the community living in it (Sergej Olenin, Jean-Paul Ducrottoy, “The Concept of Biotope in Marine Ecology and Coastal Management, *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, Vol. 53 (2006), No. 1, 20–9), the concept of biotope is rarely used in the humanities and social sciences. See however the suggestion that cultural conditions work as a “human biotope” in Ernst Boesch, “Reasons for a Symbolic Concept of Action,” *Culture & Psychology*, Vol. 3 (1997), No. 3, 423–31.

¹³ On the notion of place and its inextricable relation to human experience, see Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. “Never rats in a housing maze” is a quote from Donna Gabaccia in *From Sicily to Elizabeth Street*, *op. cit.*, xviii.

¹⁴ Bruno Latour, Albena Yaneva, ““Give Me a Gun and I Will Make All Buildings Move’: An ANT’s View of Architecture,” in Reto Geiser (ed.), *Explorations in Architecture: Teaching, Design, Research*, Basel: Birkhauser, 2008, 80–9.

¹⁵ Henri Lefèbvre, *Le Droit à la ville*, Paris: Anthropos, 1968; *La Révolution urbaine*, Paris: Gallimard, 1970. See also, from a philosophical standpoint, Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, Indianapolis (IN): Indiana University Press, 2009.

explored the spatial frameworks of cultural and social development.¹⁶ In history, such connections between the material world and human representations have seldom been approached at a micro level.¹⁷

Here, we need to address these issues, not least because they are crucial to understand the rest of the narrative. The relationships between the cités and their larger environment, as well as those between the tenement block and its inhabitants, co-produced the evolving circumstances in which the residents' encounters "took place." In other words, this particular set of space and time conditions is where identifications were being constantly enacted and negotiated.¹⁸

What was it like to live in the cités? Who were the residents? To what extent did their living space affect them, and how in turn did they shape its material and symbolic character? The answers to those questions depend as much on the observed realities as on our own analytical choices. First, let us look at the micro-context from a geographic standpoint, before turning to socio-demographic considerations.

1.1. Different geographies, geographies of difference

Place names

Toponymy is one of the first lenses through which the sense of place can be measured, as well as the discrepancies between external labellings and vernacular,

¹⁶ Daniel Miller, *Worlds Apart: Modernity through the Prism of the Local*, London: Routledge, 1995; Setha M. Low, Denise Lawrence-Zúñiga (eds.), *The Anthropology of Space and Place: Locating Culture*, London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003.

¹⁷ See Philip Whalen, Patrick Young (eds.), *Place and Locality in Modern France*, London, New York (NY): Bloomsbury, 2014.

¹⁸ Bernard Haumont, "Préface. Entre public et privé: des espaces et des lieux toujours en chantier," in Ministère de la culture et de la communication, Bernard Haumont, Alain Morel (eds.), *La Société des voisins. Partager un habitat collectif*, Paris: Éditions de la M.S.H., 2005, XIX. On the concept of cohabitation, see also Alfredo Alietti, *La Convivenza difficile. Coabitazione interetnica in un quartiere di Milano*, Turin: L'Harmattan Italia, 1998, 22.

bottom-up identifications.¹⁹ In the Plaine, name changes could be imposed by public institutions. For a start, civic numbers were modified at the beginning of our period.²⁰ Then, soon after the socialists took control of Saint-Denis city hall in 1892, the street immediately south of the buildings was named rue Proudhon, after the famous anarchist figure.²¹ This could have left an ideological mark on people's mental maps, if only they had shared the political culture of the city council. For decades, the street was commonly called "Prudhon" by locals, unwittingly trading the revolutionary for the painter.²²

Nearby impasses had been named after landowners who initially owned the grounds, Chaudron and Trézel. Both were still alive and well at the beginning of our period, and the latter was the one who, along with his wife, rented and eventually sold the property at No. 96-102 to Louise Versigny.²³ The local influence of M. Chaudron, who was elected to city council from 1886 to 1893, was certainly buttressed by this onomastic privilege.²⁴

¹⁹ For the importance of naming in the experience of place, see Marja Viljamaa-Laakso, "Urban names and identity," in Wilhelm Fritz Hermann Nicolaisen (ed.), *Proceedings of the XIXth International Congress of Onomastic Sciences, Aberdeen, 4-11.08.1996*, Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 1998, 364; Lawrence D. Berg, Jani Vuolteenhaho (eds.), *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*, Burlington (VT): Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009.

²⁰ See AD93, 4Q5, Acte 27, 19.12.1883, "Adjudication d'un droit de bail de terrains sis à Saint-Denis et des constructions édifiées sur ces terrains, par les héritiers Lévêque à Mlle Versigny," and compare *Annuaire-almanach du commerce, de l'industrie, de la magistrature et de l'administration*, Paris... Firmin Didot et Bottin réunis, 1882, p. 2342, and 1883, p. 1283 ("Verdier, Caen & Cie"). The old 84, 86, and 88 became the new 96 and 98 av. de Paris, and the old 90 became the new 100 and 102. If the city council ever held a vote on the subject, it is absent from the *BMOSD* and the 1D series of the SDMA.

²¹ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 327.

²² See e.g. AD93, 4U7/958, Commissaire de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal du 4.02.1897 c. veuve Beaudouin, 100 av. de Paris. See also below, figure 5.

²³ FNA, Minutes Me Ingrain, MC/ET/CIV/382/B, 29.03.1859; AD93, 4Q5, Vol. 4994, Acte 12, 1.09.1880, *doc. cit.* The property was part of a larger plot of land initially bought by the father of Ms. Trézel née Halouze at auction in 1815 and 1818, which he had used as pasture for dairy-cows.

²⁴ Along with other former council members in the area, M. Chaudron remained influential for years. See SDMA, CT94, Conseil municipal, dossiers de séance, 1894, 13.02.1894, Petition from Plaine inhabitants to the Préfet de Police, handed to the Mayor of Saint-Denis on 13.02.1894. On Chaudron's term on the council, see SDMA, CT513, Élections municipales, 1886, 1.08.1886. During his time at city hall, Chaudron was in charge of making recommendations on families who asked for poverty benefits, including residents of No. 100 av. de Paris. He would directly hand residents money and bread

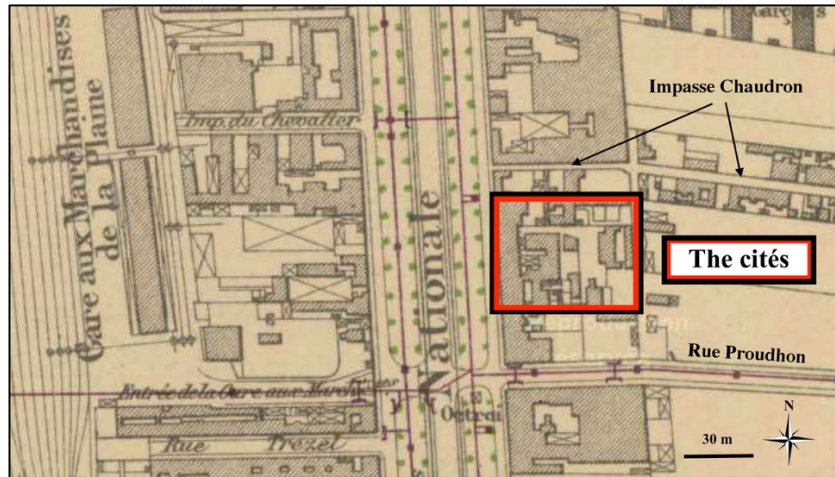


Figure 4: The tenement at 96-102 Av. de Paris in its immediate surroundings, 1899

In early years, locals were quite unbothered by the straightforward name “Avenue de Paris,” which had emerged initially as a simple geographic term.²⁵ Many did not even use it, simply adding a number, on their correspondence, to “Plaine-Saint-Denis.”²⁶ Authorities were still hesitant themselves, sometimes preferring the name “Route numéro 1.”²⁷ And yet years before the Avenue was renamed “Président-Wilson” in 1919 to honour the famed American peacemaker, locals had started complaining about the name “Avenue de Paris.” It was routinely mistaken, they

when necessary; see for instance, SDMA, CT806, Demandes de secours, enquête de Chaudron sur la famille Lauber, 17.01.1892. On this point, see also chapter 3, point 3.1.3.

²⁵ In use since the 1850s, the term still coexisted initially with the appellations “route de Paris” and “avenue de Saint-Denis” (see *La Presse*, 2.05.1853, 3; SDMA, 10Fi2/1, “Tableau d’assemblage,” 1854).

²⁶ See the mention “Plaine Saint-Denis 96” written by Chrétien Lentz in SDMA, CT81, Conseil municipal, dossiers de séance, 1892, Petition from Plaine taxpayers requesting a special day of tax collection, 4.06.1892. For his part, Jean-Baptiste Pezza referred to “Plaine-Saint-Denis 100” as one of his places of residence (FNA, BB/11/11050, 66799 x 28).

²⁷ See e.g. 5.03.1892, SDMA, CT83, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to the Ingénieur ordinaire of the Seine department, 14.02.1892. The 1899 map partially reproduced on figure 4 bears both names, “Avenue de Paris” and “Route Nationale n°1,” which explains the presence of the adjective “Nationale” in the middle of the picture.

argued, for the rue de Paris in central Saint-Denis, or the rue Saint-Denis in Paris.²⁸ In the early 1880s, a group of inhabitants petitioned the city council to have it renamed after Garibaldi –to no avail.²⁹

The Plaine-Saint-Denis itself, where about a fifth of the city population lived at the turn of the century,³⁰ was generally viewed –by its inhabitants as well as outsiders– as a distinct entity from Saint-Denis. When Plainards³¹ talked about “Saint-Denis,” they meant the city centre, “Saint-Denis ville.”³² So ingrained was this perception that some addressed letters to the “mayor of La Plaine.”³³ Beyond the geographic, visible separation marked by the canal, differences between the Plaine and the centre were real. For decades, the southern area remained deprived of roadworks, public lighting and water system. As a consequence, requests for administrative independence were repeatedly filed by local councilmen.³⁴

Autonomous or not, the administrative status of the area did not really concern the people living there. For one thing, the Plaine was never experienced as a whole. The reference points were neighbourhoods of much smaller proportions. Often named after familiar landmarks such as streets, factories, or public buildings, the borders were uncertain and overlapped in people’s minds. To the north, where the stadium now

²⁸ *BMOSD*, 29.11.1881, 204–5.

²⁹ *BMOSD*, 1883, 157, 22.06.1883.

³⁰ *BMOSD*, 18.05.1901, 20.

³¹ The term “Plainard(-e)(-s),” still in use today, was common locally to refer to the inhabitants of the Plaine-Saint-Denis. See e.g. *Le Réveil de Saint-Denis*, 13.08.1904; *BMOSD*, 30.08.1911, 503.

³² See an example among many others in SDMA, 121 AC W 9, Fascicule “Interviews expo 1870-1920,” 4: “*On avait pas besoin d’aller à Saint-Denis. On avait tout à la Plaine.*” For the expression “Saint-Denis ville,” see SDMA, 30 Fi 179, postcard [no date].

³³ See e.g. SDMA, CT398, Letter from M. Resoff to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 25.02.1919; see also chapter 2, figure 11.

³⁴ Musée d’art et d’histoire de Saint Denis, *Des cheminées dans la Plaine, cent ans d’industrie à Saint-Denis, 1830-1930*, Paris: Créaphis, 1998, 16–21. In addition, at the end of the 19th century, mail parcels were not delivered at the Plaine-Saint-Denis train station; people had to collect them at Saint-Denis main station or at the Gare du Nord (SDMA, 2D2 37, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to a local MP –name illegible, Feb. 1899).

stands, lay “le Gaz,” named after one, and later two, gigantic gas factories.³⁵ Then, going south, came the “Pont de Soissons,” a metallic railway bridge visible from afar. The area around it, otherwise known as the “Landy,”³⁶ would morph into the “quartier chinois” in the interwar period.³⁷ Walking further south, appeared “la Justice” and “la Montjoie,” based on corresponding street names. Those two streets led to a dense network of narrow pathways with low, poorly built houses.³⁸ If one kept moving toward Paris, the next area was the “quartier de la Verrerie.” In its heart stood the cités.³⁹

³⁵ Of the old names visible on the early 19th century maps, only “La Montjoie” survived, between the schools and the rue du Landy.

³⁶ The bridge going over the Avenue, is still standing. It dates to 1860, and belonged to the railway line connecting Paris to Soissons. As for the “Landy,” which derived from more ancient spellings (L’Endit, Lendit, Landit), it had been a well-known name for centuries (Anne Lombard-Jourdan, *Montjoie et Saint-Denis ! Le Centre de la Gaule aux origines de Paris et de Saint-Denis*, Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1989, 48–54).

³⁷ Reasons for that later appellation are unclear. Mme Luengo attributed the name’s origin to a Colombian woman with almond-shaped eyes (Int. Luengo, No. 40, 21.08.2016). Natacha Lillo suspected a reference to the “Barrio chino” in Barcelona, a disreputable area that gave its name to other Spanish settlements in France (“Espagnols en banlieue rouge...,” *op. cit.*, 157). Julian Saíz, whose father lived in the cités starting in 1917, expressed his surprise at the name because “as far as man could recall, no one ever saw a Chinaman there” (Julián Saíz, *Olvido o recuerdo. Un médico español en Aubervilliers*, Aubervilliers: J. Saíz, 156 av. Victor-Hugo, 2001, 49). He was wrong on that point: Chinese and Indochinese workers had been dwelling nearby during the Great war (see APP, CB 92.14, 1917/708, 24.07.1917; CB 92.15, 1918/1369, 30.12.1918).

³⁸ It was only later that these parts would be referred to as “La Petite Espagne,” a name coined by outsiders in the 1930s. See Natacha Lillo, *op. cit.*, 133–7.

³⁹ See below, figure 17.



*Figure 5: The Avenue de Paris and the cités viewed
from the south, no date [1915-1919]⁴⁰*

Second, locals used their own geographic references. Whatever the names of their street or neighbourhood, they had no doubt they lived in Paris. A couple of residents referred to their address as “*Paris Plaine-Saint Denis 96*.”⁴¹ The evolution of the names of the tenement block itself is telling. The term “cité” was primarily used, before the

⁴⁰ The photograph is posterior to 1915 because on the original the window of the bakery on the far-right side bears the mention “Maison Aubert, successeur Hatterer.” In 1915, Mr. Hatterer was still a baker there (APP, CB 92.12 [unbound, in CB 92.27], 1915/841, 16.11.1915). The picture was taken before 1919, since the name of the Avenue has not yet been changed into “Avenue du Président-Wilson.”

⁴¹ Letter from Chrétien Moser and Louise Moser née Lentz to the Justice Minister, 7.10.1883, in FNA, BB/11/1710, 4521 x 83, Chrétien Moser. Chrétien and Louise’s 21-year old nephew, also called Chrétien Lentz, resided at No. 96 as well, and would equally claim a few years later that he and his family were living in Paris (Application form, 21.10.1890, in FNA, BB/11/2475, 9087 x 90, Chrétien Lentz). Years later, Paul Fraioli, who had lived 18 years in the Plaine, including seven years at No. 100 before moving to Aulnay-sous-Bois, stated that all these years he had been living “in Paris” (“Récépissé d’engagement à acquérir la nationalité française,” in FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14, Paul Fraioli). The choice, in this dissertation’s title, to define the cités as a *Paris* tenement would not have been much of a stretch in the eyes of many residents.

Great War, to refer to a courtyard with different units of housing.⁴² In early years, all the constructions at the back of the plot were referred to as “*cité Nicolas*,” a name probably related to the man who first erected the houses behind that of Louise Versigny, in 1868.⁴³ Be that as it may, the expression was used by residents themselves up until the early 1900s, and occasionally picked up by outsiders.⁴⁴

The courtyards were then sporadically labelled in ways that reflected the origin of their populations, a point we will come back to later.⁴⁵ For their part, residents seem to have always preferred to use “*le 100*,” “*le 96*,” “*le 98*”.⁴⁶ As for the hotel, no one in the Plaine ever referred to it by its official name –first *hôtel de l’Oise*, then *hôtel du Point du Jour*–, but by the name of its owners, just as every other shop around. “*Chez Poullain*,” “*chez Delamotte*,” “*chez Mandagot*” were the vernacular appellations that served as milestones in the residents’ mental geographies.⁴⁷

⁴² See e.g. AD93, 4U7/915, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, 20.09.1891, Report by the officer Vincent, about Nos. 2-4 Av. de Paris (“*une cour, espèce de cité*”).

⁴³ Some of the first houses at the back of the plot at No. 100-102 were built in the late 1860s by a man from Mosel, Nicolas Jacman, who had migrated to the Paris area in the mid-1850s. His widow sold the houses to Louise Versigny in 1878 (see Maison L, “*impasse cité Nicolas*,” in AD93, D4P4 57, “*Documents préparatoires à l’établissement du cadastre, bulletins de recensement de propriété*,” No. 43, 102 Av. de Paris [1880s-1890s]; SDMA, E209, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1874, No. 369, 20.05.1874). The expression “*cité Nicolas*” was already in use in late 1868 to designate the constructions at the back of the property (see *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, 14.10.1868, CXXX).

⁴⁴ See *Le Petit Journal*, 6.12.1869; Mandate signed by Louise Honorine Vachée, 21.04.1880, in AD93, 4U7/450; AD93, 4U7/453, 18.11.1881, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, Billion c. Maire (henceforth all documents sourced in AD93 4U7 series without further precision shall be civil rulings from the *Justice de paix**); AD93, 4L2, Parish archives, Sainte-Geneviève-de-la-Plaine, baptisms, 1884, No. 30, 24.02.1884; *BMOSD*, 7.11.1886, 2; Letter from François Engelmann to the Minister of Justice, 22.09.1888, in FNA, BB/11/2186, 9792 x 88, François Engelmann; AD93, 4U7/533, 14.10.1896, Dion c. époux Robert; AVP, D4R1 490, 1887, No. 2875, Philippe Dimnet; *La Justice*, 23.08.1900.

⁴⁵ See below, p. 129–30.

⁴⁶ When asked what their cités looked like, some could have employed the word “*caserne*” (barracks), attested for similar buildings in the vicinity. See Léon Bonneff, *Aubervilliers (Roman)*, Talence: L’Arbre vengeur, 2015 (first ed. Paris: Floréal, 1922-1923), 34.

⁴⁷ The Poullains owned the bar-hotel at No. 102 from 1881 to 1920; the Delamottes owned the charcuterie at No. 98 from 1891 to the early 1920s; M. and Mme Mandagot ran the bar-hotel at No. 102 from 1928 until the mid-1960s.

Surroundings

The landscape around the cités changed rapidly in the last third of the 19th century, as fields and waste lands sprouted more and more factories.⁴⁸ The opening in 1884 of an industrial railroad, connecting every new company to the main railway line, triggered an industrial boom.⁴⁹ Soon the chemical and metals sectors were employing thousands of workers. The glassworks, which had started with 10 people in 1859, had 862 by 1902. It covered at that date 16,000 square meters.⁵⁰ Mouton, the wire-drawing factory opened in 1883, now extended over 80,000.⁵¹

By the end of the century, thirty years of frantic industrialisation had increased the relative poverty of inhabitants, and the overcrowding of the Plaine. But the Avenue was so large that the population density was not what newcomers first noticed upon arrival. They rather set their eyes on the eclectic mix of constructions.⁵² “Brutal, indiscrete structures” in the shape of “bald quadrilaterals,” alternated with low, “limping” buildings and clusters of factory chimneys that looked like “lances, masts or vertical cannons.”⁵³ Once they would get closer, acrid emanations and awful stench were hard to escape, due to the high concentration of chemical factories processing guts, fertilizers, ink, tallow, grease, or sulphuric acid. Air pollution became close to unbearable during the Great War, to the point where locals petitioned to prevent a new gut factory from opening.⁵⁴ Fortunately, the Avenue de Paris provided

⁴⁸ See Jean-Paul Brunet, “Aux origines de l’industrialisation de Saint-Denis,” *Études de la région parisienne*, 1969, No. 22, 16–22.

⁴⁹ “Le chemin de fer industriel de la Plaine Saint-Denis et d’Aubervilliers,” *R.G.C.F.*, April 1890, 265–8; Conseil d’architecture, d’urbanisme et de l’environnement de la Seine-Saint-Denis, *Inventaire du patrimoine industriel: Saint-Denis*, Bobigny: Conseil général de la Seine-Saint-Denis, 1988, 100.

⁵⁰ *Évolution de la géographie industrielle...*, *op. cit.*, 469.

⁵¹ SDMA, 1SD403, Pierre Douzenel, *op. cit.*, 839–44.

⁵² See a description in Paul de Rouziers, *Les Grandes industries françaises: les industries chimiques*, Paris: Masson, 1927, 9.

⁵³ Jules Romains, *Paris des hommes de bonne volonté* (orig. published between 1932 and 1947), Paris: Flammarion, 1949, 61.

⁵⁴ André Guillerme, Anne-Cécile Lefort, Gérard Jigaudon, *Dangereux, insalubres et incommodes...*, *op. cit.*, 214, 282; *JSD*, 12.04.1916, 23.04.1916, 3.05.1916.

a much-welcome escape, both from the industrial sounds and smells and from the dark and narrow alleys like those inside the cités.

For Louise Versigny, her tenants and their successors, the daily geography worked in different concentric perimeters. In the first one, the shops for essentials: coal merchant, charcutier, grocer, fabric merchant, shoemaker, dairy shop and baker, were all within a few meters of the entrance doors of the cités.⁵⁵ The open-air market took place twice a week on the opposite side of the Avenue, and fostered encounters between people from all origins, classes and genders.⁵⁶

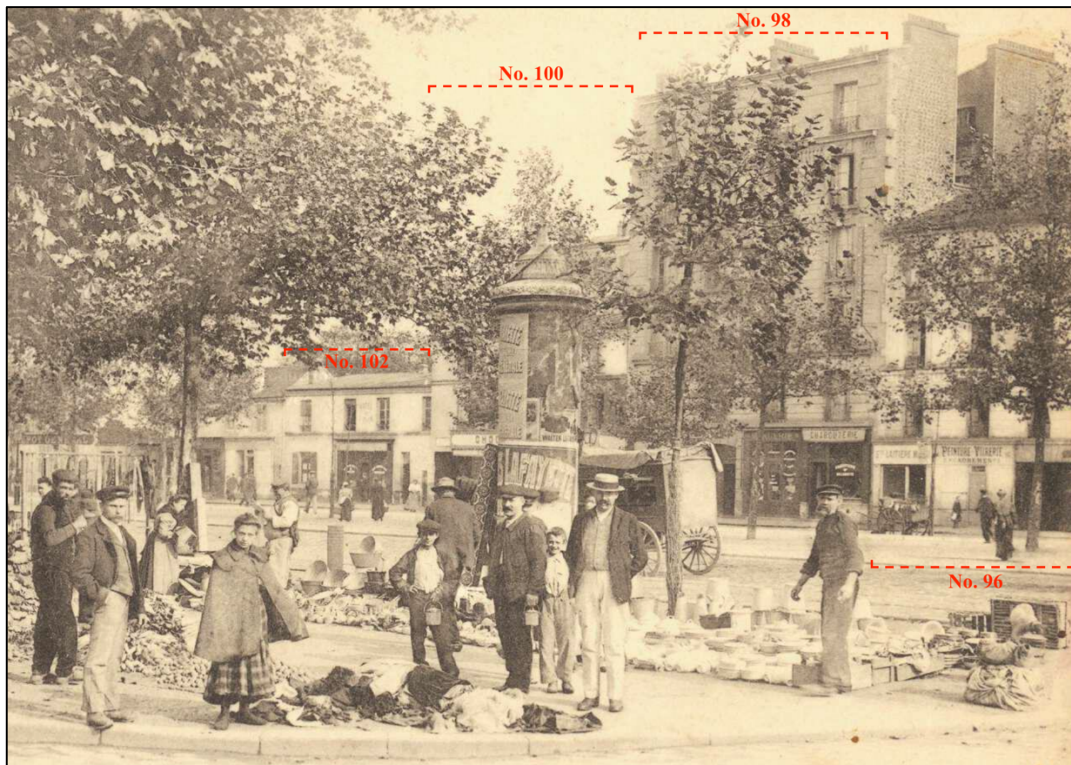


Figure 6: The market on the Avenue de Paris before the Great War, with the cités in the background⁵⁷

⁵⁵ A few of those shops are visible on figures 5 and 6.

⁵⁶ See Marius Barroux, André Barroux, André Marie, *Saint-Denis*, Paris: Grasset, 1938, 62.

⁵⁷ The flea market represented here was called “*petit marché*” and followed the food stalls of the main market. The open door immediately to the right of the horse-cart is No. 98 (compare with figure

There, vendors from far-away places could bond with residents and even employ them for menial tasks. M. Le Goff, a Breton construction worker from No. 96, could be regularly seen shelling peas by a stall.⁵⁸ Spanish and Italian women from the Plaine eventually became vendors as well, selling goods without permit,⁵⁹ while children from the cités could be caught stealing in the crowd.⁶⁰

Most of the residents' daily life took place on the eastern part of the Avenue. "*Les numéros impairs, c'était un autre village*," a former resident remembered.⁶¹ Next-door from the cités, at No. 104, was "La Famille," a cooperative founded in the late 1880s where members could purchase basic goods at a discount ranging from 5 to 10%. There is little doubt that some residents enlisted, at least in early years.⁶² Access to that space contributed to enact differences between residents. As with regular shops, the cooperative was mostly the domain of women, and probably not those from the poorest families, who could not afford the membership fee.

As for men's sociability, it revolved, first and foremost, around the *débats*.* In the vicinity of the cités, the offer in that regard soon became plentiful to a fault. Everyone

13). To the right of the door, one can make out the haberdashery (No. 98), Mr. Delamotte's charcuterie (No. 98), the Maggi dairy-shop (No. 96), the paint shop formerly held by Mr. Walter (No. 96), and the entrance door of No. 96. To the left of the Morris column, the entrance of No. 100 and the front window of the bar-hotel at No. 102 are visible.

⁵⁸ In SDMA, CT546, an undated document listing the merchants mentions 26 merchants from Saint-Denis and 56 from elsewhere. In 1917, one merchant came from as far as Russia (APP, CB 92.13, 1917/390, 16-17.04.1917). Regarding M. Le Goff, see APP, CB 92.6, 1910/812, 22.09.1910. The project of a covered market, formed when the land was already scarce, never came to fruition (SDMA, CT97, Petition from the 6 councilmen from the Plaine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 27.01.1920).

⁵⁹ APP, CB 92.18, 1921/758-9, 8.09.1921.

⁶⁰ APP, CB 92.6, 1910/1022, 6.12.1910; JSD, 9.04.1916.

⁶¹ Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016 ("The odd-number side was another village").

⁶² We have not been able to find archives documenting membership. The cooperative had 80 members at its inception in 1887, 245 in 1894 but then shrank, due in part to personal rivalries. See Achille Daudé-Bancel, "Une coopérative de consommation, 'La Famille', société coopérative de consommation, d'épargne et de Prévoyance sociale, 104, avenue de Paris, La Plaine-Saint-Denis (Seine)," in Centre de recherche et d'action sociales, *L'Action populaire. Publication tri-mensuelle*, 4^e série, No. 88 (1905), 3-28; Jean Gaumont, *Les Mouvements de la coopération ouvrière dans les banlieues parisiennes*, Paris: P.U.F., 1932, 95-107.

had his favourite establishment: to name only the nearest ones, there was Poullain's at No. 102, the "Petit bar" at No. 96-98, Reynat's at No. 92. During the Great War, at a time of major restrictions on alcohol consumption, there would be 466 bars in the Plaine, about 1 per every 105 people.⁶³ Bars were generally opened to anyone, and few of those on the Avenue displayed an ethnic character, overtly or not. Age was not even the barrier it was supposed to be, except for girls. As for housewives, they were never explicitly barred, and the bourgeois norms of not going out without their husband did not have much currency in the cités. Most simply did not have enough time to go.⁶⁴

A few feet out from Reynat's window stood another landmark: the little *bureau de l'octroi* (customs), where goods had to be cleared before being carried into Paris. Over the years, it would provide a hideout for disgruntled lovers lying in ambush; a meeting point for assassins; a shelter for fugitives.⁶⁵



⁶³ APP, CB 92.11, 1915/388, 22.06.1915; CB 92.17, 1921/23, 13.12.1920-08.01.1921. As a point of comparison, a 1941 provision still in force in 2018 forbids new openings of alcohol-serving establishments when the density rate reaches 1 per 450 people (Art. 12 of the law of 24.09.1941, now Art. L. 3332-1 of the Code de la santé publique).

⁶⁴ Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016.

⁶⁵ APP, CB 92.1, 1905/19, 6.01.1905; *La Lanterne*, 09.01.1906; APP, CB 92.6, 1910/549, 27.06.1910: in 1910, a 25-year-old living at No. 100 took refuge there for two hours as he was chased by a band armed with knives and guns.

*Figure 7: The “bureau de l’octroi” and rue Proudhon in the interwar period*⁶⁶

The local place of worship was initially an old chapel of modest proportions, a few hundred steps to the north, on the even number side.⁶⁷ A new church was erected in 1899-1900, in a neo-romanesque style, across from the old one. Walking up there and back on Sundays provided residents with an important opportunity to exchange information, forge bonds and display their affinity or disdain for others.⁶⁸ At roughly the same distance were the local schools, routinely referred to as “*le 120*.” Inside the school premises was located the largest meeting room in the area. It was regularly booked by societies of all sorts, and served as voting precinct on election days.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Compare with figures 4 and 5 and note the octroi’s slight change of position after the Great War.

⁶⁷ That chapel on the eastern sidewalk, was in such a poor state that it became unusable by the late 1880s. For sacraments, people had to look elsewhere, for example in La Villette. René Louis Abel Tissot, born in the area in 1889, remembered: “*Comme à la Plaine il n’y avait pas d’église, j’ai été baptisé dans Paris, à la Villette*.” SDMA, fonds Tissot, 21 S 055 002, 3^e feuillet, 14 [no date, 1973]. The new church was dedicated to Sainte-Genève.

⁶⁸ Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016.

⁶⁹ SDMA, CT405, “Demandes d’autorisation de réunions,” 1902; CT424, “Registre de récépissé de déclarations de réunions publiques,” 1881-1907; CT514, Élection d’un conseiller général, 20–27.05.1900. In the 1910s, the 120 was also chosen as the location for a municipal soup kitchen (SDMA, 1Q6, 25.08.1911; 1Q7, 15.08.1914).



*Figure 8: The primary schools,
with the Saint-Geneviève church in the distance, 1913⁷⁰*

A municipal library, public baths, a police station and a post office, where migrant workers would line up every other Saturday to send remittances back home, completed this first cluster of public services.⁷¹

The second circle roughly matched the limits of the Plaine itself. The gas factories to the north, where a few male residents started commuting from the 1900s;⁷² the walls of Paris to the South; and to the East and West, the canal and the railroad respectively.

⁷⁰ Note that while the schools were referred to as “le 120,” their entrance was (and still is) located in the impasse Diderot, which is the street visible on the picture. The Avenue de Paris is in the background, where the Sainte-Geneviève church stands. The church’s belltower is also visible on figure 5.

⁷¹ Jean Lemoine, “L’émigration bretonne à Paris,” *art. cit.*, 177. Initially, a gendarmerie unit was stationed for two decades right next to the cités, in the courtyard of No. 92. After it left, the only police station was a little further up the avenue, at No. 120 until 1893 (see Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 316–9). The post office was at No. 110.

⁷² For one of the earliest instances of a resident working at the Gaz, see Auguste Grandpierre, from No. 96, AD93, 1E66/262, Saint-Denis, births, 1908, vol. 2, No. 1373, 18.10.1908.

It is inside that circle that the cinemas, the football pitch and the boxing ring, all popular with residents, would later appear.⁷³

But these leisure-related perimeters, just as their work equivalents, would only expand with more time –in particular thanks to the 1919 law on the 8-hour workday– and infrastructure. In the early decades of our period, an after-work stroll and a brief call at the bar were almost all residents could hope for, on weekdays, in the time that remained outside of factory and domestic work.⁷⁴ Weekends allowed card games, time to tend one's allotment garden, and longer nights in bars, that is, on the time left by domestic chores, family gatherings and religious duties.⁷⁵ Public entertainment in Saint-Denis generally took place on Saturday and Sunday evenings.⁷⁶ It is also in this second perimeter that local festivals would take place. In early June, the *fête du Landy* raged north of the cités for a fortnight; and right outside of the cités, on the Avenue, the "*fête de la Plaine*" took place in August.⁷⁷

⁷³ A cinema opened at No. 217 av. de Paris in the late 1900s, another in the rue du Landy shortly thereafter (SDMA, 1Q6, 26.01.1911; 1Q7, 26.05.1914). There were three picture houses in Saint-Denis in 1921-22. Until the 1930s, screenings were only from Fridays to Sundays. Lazare Mazoyer, a 19-year-old from No. 96, would go to the cinema with his friends during the Great War (APP, CB 92.11, 1915/152, 8.04.1915). In the 1940s, Benedetto Pirolli, a resident at No. 100, became a football referee at the "Stade des gaziers," located near the gas factories, while his son played for the local team (Int. Bouchard, No. 16, 17.04.2016). As for Vincent Carbone, also from No. 100, he won his first tournaments on a boxing ring set up across from the schools at No. 120 in the early 1930s (Int. Piacitelli, No. 49, 6.07.2016).

⁷⁴ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 1120-25. At Legras, people had in theory some free time between shifts. Until 1900, workdays were discontinuous: one shift worked from 6 to 11 am and from 6 pm to 11 pm, and another from 12 to 6 pm and from midnight to 6 am. But work was so strenuous that workers usually rested in their spare time (see *Le Soleil*, 10.05.1900; AD93, 4U7/997, Letter from M. Legras to Commissaire de police de la Plaine-Saint-Denis, 27.11.1901).

⁷⁵ Many descendants of residents remember the importance of the "*jardins ouvriers*" in the interwar period, which were generally located in the Plaine or in nearby banlieues. Int. Leo (No. 21), 1.08.2016; Int. Postel (No. 38) 2.08.2016; Int. Federmeier (No. 47), 23.11.2016; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018. On this point, see Béatrice Cabedoce, Philippe Pierson (eds.), *Cent ans d'histoire des jardins ouvriers, 1896-1996: la ligue française du coin de terre et du foyer*, Paris: Créaphis, 1996.

⁷⁶ And occasionally on Mondays evenings. On this point, see Lenard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris, 1871-1914*, Baltimore (MD), London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984, 126.

⁷⁷ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 1125. On the *fête de la Plaine*, see SDMA, 1 I 227. Another fair was organised in November near the Pont de Soissons (see SDMA, 1Q5, 25.11.1910).

By contrast, the fête des Rosières, in which four or five deserving young brides were celebrated and awarded a dowry from the municipality, happened in the city centre. It is doubtful that residents would have attended the gathering, except when young girls from the cités were among the selected few.⁷⁸ The centre of Saint-Denis, with its city hall, *Justice de paix**, cemetery and hospital formed one end of the longest radius of day-to-day mobilities. Almost all residents had to go to these places at some stage, though not more than a couple of times a year. Probably tired of commuting back and forth to the centre, Louise Versigny herself (who had no paid job to take a leave from) decided to cease attending hearings at the *Justice de paix* in person and let a representative plead her cases.⁷⁹

Aubervilliers and Pantin to the East, and the northern districts of Paris to the South, were also part of that extended roaming space.⁸⁰ In Paris were les Halles, where market gardeners went on a regular basis to sell their produce; hospitals, where residents found an alternative sanitary option for a long time; and public and private institutions that would prove critical for residents over the years, like embassies, charities, and train stations. The capital became closer for everyone with the expansion of transportation means in the two decades before the Great War.⁸¹ In 1892, the electric tramway line on the Avenue de Paris made passages more frequent and reliable. Bicycles started being spotted in the area around 1900s, and an early cycling club had its headquarters at No. 102.⁸² Not all residents had the means nor the desire to own a “*vélodépède*”

⁷⁸ See SDMA, 1Q11, 16.11.1922, Blanche Bernard (No. 96); CT1162, “Fondation des Filles à marier,” Note sur Blanche Marie Bernard et Antoine Stéphanus, 1923.

⁷⁹ A hearing of August 1894 was the last time she went to the court herself (AD93, 4U7/507, 10.08.1894, Versigny c. Martens). Although she would initially supplement her income by working home as a seamstress (see SDMA, 1F17, 1886 census, 100 Av. de Paris), the rental business quickly proved profitable enough for Louise to cease working entirely.

⁸⁰ APP, CB 82.4, 1904/521-523, 29.05.1904; 1904/615, 30.06.1904; CB 89.48, 1914/1332, 23.10.1914; CB 92.14, 1917/1996, 8.12.1917; CB 92.24, 1927/880, 30.04.1927.

⁸¹ Jean Bastié, *La Croissance de la banlieue parisienne*, Paris: P.U.F., 135.

⁸² “La Pédale de Saint-Denis,” founded in 1899. See SDMA, CT401, Letter from the Head of the 2nd Bureau at the Préfecture de Police to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 24.08.1899.

though, and for years, women and girls were simply not supposed to ride them.⁸³ But the popularity of the new vehicle grew steadily.



Figure 9: Youngsters with a bicycle, by the Plaine post office, 1908

The opening of a new train station near the Pont de Soissons in 1913, which many residents would use over the years,⁸⁴ and the arrival of the metro at Porte de la Chapelle in 1916 completed the connection of the Plaine with Paris.⁸⁵

⁸³ A good bicycle was worth 200 francs in 1905, but could be purchased for a tenth of its value on the black market (APP, CB 92.2, 1905/826, 21.08.1905). As far as we know, Angèle Reale was the first female resident to own a bicycle, during the Great War (APP, CB 92.15, 1918/607, 4-6.06.1918).

⁸⁴ APP, CB 92.20, 1924/155, 5.02.1924; CB 92.26, 1930/1957, 5.10.1930. Residents could also take trains to Saint-Ouen or Pantin at the “Plaine-tramways” station, opened in the 1880s, or at the Pont Hainguerlot, to the south of the cités (SDMA, 2 Fi 3/10; APP, CB 92.12, 1916/516, 25.06.1916; SDMA, 1 Fi 14, Map of Saint-Denis, 1922).

⁸⁵ Note that the connection was not seamless at all times. At night, before 1914, public transport stopped and the porte de la Chapelle closed. Only the *apaches* dared go back and forth in the dark of the fortifs. See Simone Delattre, *Les Douze heures noires: la nuit à Paris au XIX^e siècle*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2000.

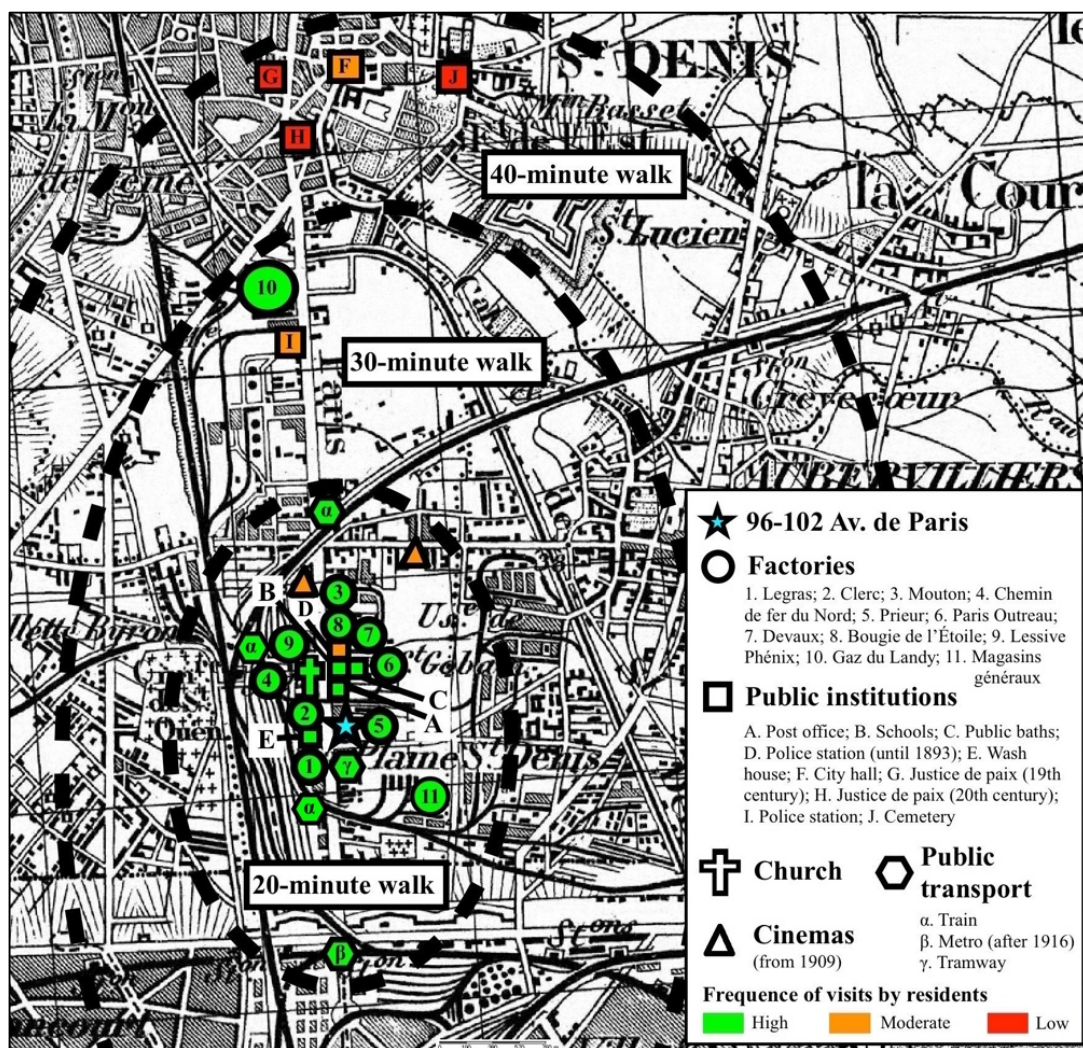


Figure 10: The main landmarks of the residents' lives in the Plaine-Saint-Denis⁸⁶

Lived spaces could also be connected in other ways than those concentric circles. The Northern railway had repair workshops in the Plaine, but residents working for the company were often positioned at La Chapelle station and Gare du Nord in Paris.⁸⁷ At No. 133 Av. de Paris stood housing units built by Legras for his workers in the early 1880s. A number of residents employed at the glass factory had family, friends,

⁸⁶ Only the sites attended by the greatest number of residents have been included.

⁸⁷ APP, CB 92.8, 1912/563, 11.06.1912; SDMA, CT352, "Déclaration du 13.03.1918 de M. Bérend Nicolas."

and former neighbours who lived there, and paid them frequent visits.⁸⁸ Young glass workers had territorial marks of their own: the school of apprenticeship of the factory was located at No. 141; the boarding house run by the notorious father Santol in an impasse to the south of the neighbourhood.⁸⁹ Less known to glassmakers, by contrast, was the showroom for the factory's latest models in Paris. The only ones to ever go there were the managers and those like M. Thomas, from No. 100, who was employed at Legras as a cart-driver.⁹⁰

Within the glass factory itself, the map changed constantly, and workspaces reflected labour divisions.⁹¹ The factory had three furnaces in 1872; three more by 1892; ten in the early 1900s; three in the 1920s; two in 1931.⁹² Almost all were in use day and night. The male-only personnel of fusion halls were divided in teams, called "*places*," where age and earnings distinguished workers along strict hierarchies. Around the *ouvriers verriers* and the *souffleurs*, the most senior and geographically static positions, buzzed the younger *cueilleurs* and the little *gamins*, who kept hurrying from one spot to the next, carrying red-hot glass balls at the tip of long metal canes. In 1903, *ouvriers verriers* earned 2,5 more than *cueilleurs*, and 5 times more than *gamins*.⁹³

⁸⁸ We know of 10 families who moved directly from the cités to No. 133 over the period, and 2 who did in the opposite direction (see www.paris-tenement.eu, "Residents moving in and out"). For instances of contacts and visits between inhabitants at the two addresses, see APP, CB 92.1, 1905/177, 14.03.1905; CB 92.9, 1912/1086, 28.10.1912; CB 92.23, 1926/1352, 10.08.1926-13.09.1926.

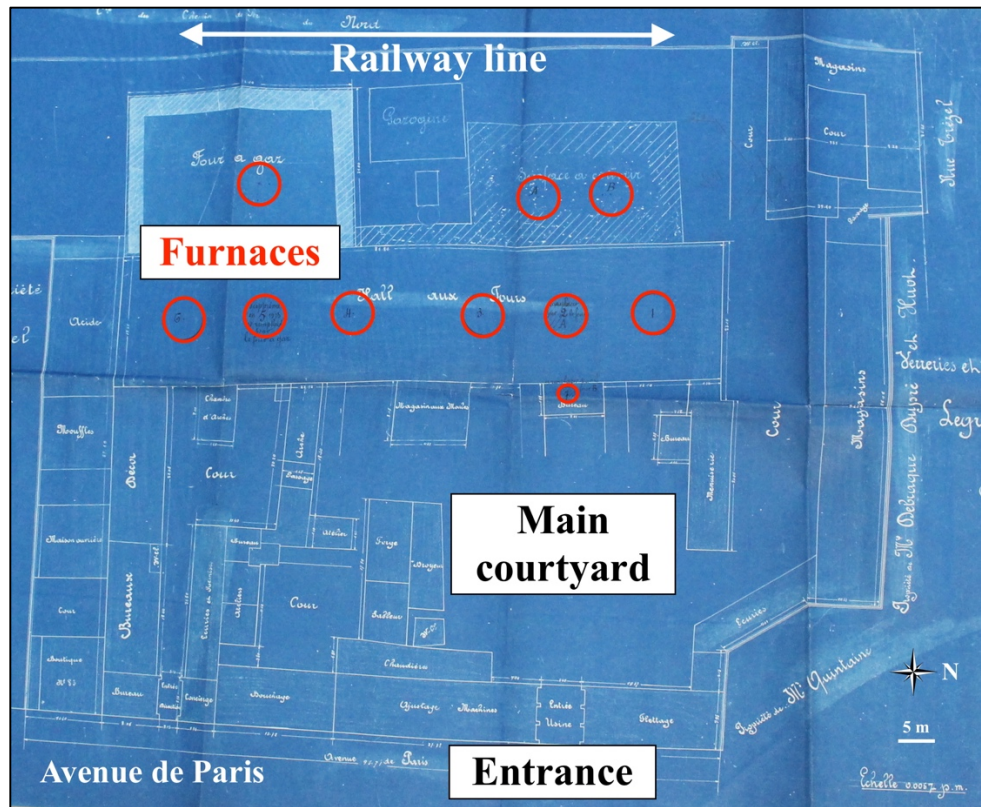
⁸⁹ See chapter 2, p. 214 *sqq.*

⁹⁰ SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 100 Av. de Paris.

⁹¹ The factory was divided into four parts: fusion and glassmaking; cutting and carving; decoration; storage and expedition.

⁹² See SDMA, CT1136, "Enquêtes de commodo et incommodo, Verreries de Saint-Denis," No. 9049, 2°; AVP, D1U10 729, Conseil de prud'hommes de la Seine, section pour les produits chimiques, 18.11.1930, 29.12.1930, Nos. 49231, 49348, François Moreau c. Sté Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies.

⁹³ Charles Benoist, "Le travail dans la grande industrie," *Revue des deux mondes*, Vol. LXXIII (1903), 1.11.1903, 190. This article is one of the most useful to understand in detail the industrial process and the manpower demographics at Legras.



Glassworkers entered and exited through the same gate twice a day, at lunch time and at six for those on day shifts.⁹⁸ Calls to work were made through a strident sirene during the day, and by the voice of “*crieurs*” at night, who went from door to door to call those assigned to the night shifts.⁹⁹ The space just outside the factory’s entrance became a concentration point. Multiple and sometimes hostile interactions took place near this bottleneck.¹⁰⁰



Figure 12: Workers by the entrance of the glass factory before the Great War

⁹⁸ In the Plaine factories, the ten-hour workday (eight after 1919) was intermitted by a lunchbreak of an hour or an hour and a half (see Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 435. For the organisation of shifts at Legras, see above, note 74.

⁹⁹ AD93, 4U7/940, Brigade de gendarmerie de Saint-Denis, P.V. du 19.04.1894 c. Klein.

¹⁰⁰ APP, CB 92.10, 1913/892, 27.09.1913; CB 92.11, 1915/223, 23.04.1915.

The tenement block itself

“Boundaries between races and species seemed to be erased... as in a pandemonium. Men, women, animals, sex, health, sickness, all seemed to be held in common by these people; everything went together, mingled, merged, superimposed...”¹⁰¹ This picturesque depiction was not made of Louise Versigny’s sometime property, but of the medieval court of miracles, in Victor Hugo’s famous rendition. But residents and observers alike saw a similarity between the two. To a conservative columnist who had come to see No. 100 for himself in 1901, the cités looked like “*une sorte de cour des miracles, qui fait regretter pour l’homme le confort des porcheries.*”¹⁰² The expression would endure for a long time in the inhabitants’ minds.¹⁰³

In a more prosaic way, the perception of No. 96 and 100 as *taudis* (hovels) was common at the turn of the century, especially among outsiders.¹⁰⁴ An Italian visitor in late 1901 described “the Cité” –the capital letter is his– as a “miserable aggregate of low and filthy tuf houses... with shutterless windows and crumbling walls; pathways reminding of the streets of Venice for the narrowness, and of those of Santa Lucia for

¹⁰¹ Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999 (transl. Alban Krailsheimer), 93–4.

¹⁰² François-Ignace Mouthon, “La traite des blancs,” *Le Matin*, 2.07.1901 (“a sort of court of miracles, which makes one long for the comfort of pigsties”).

¹⁰³ Visiting the area a few years earlier, an Italian diplomat had first heard locals use that expression to refer to a nearby building, at No. 87 Avenue de Paris (Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, “La Traite des petits italiens en France,” *La Revue des Revues*, 01.07.1897, 404; see also *JSD*, 28.09.1893). It seems that the residents of that first, crammed cité carried the expression along with them when that first place was evacuated in 1898 and most of its population moved to No. 100. Thirty years later, Paul Fraioli, one of the glass workers who had moved from No. 87 to No. 100 in 1898, remembered the address at No. 87 as “*Plaine-Saint-Denis, avenue Wilson, cour des miracles*” (FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14, Paul Fraioli). But we heard it as referring to No. 100 from former residents who grew up at No. 100 in the 1930s and 1940s. Int. Verrecchia, (No. 39), 4.09.2016; Int. Hohloh née Ricci (No. 44), 23.04.2016.

¹⁰⁴ *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 9.11.1912; *La Liberté*, 9.11.1912; APP, CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918. Residents could also use the term: see Letter from M. Alvarez, 100 av. Wilson, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.07.1922. The expression or its equivalents endured until after the Second World War: see *L’Humanité*, 10.08.1950 (“*masures*”); “Troisième cahier de Charles Bobbio,” Int. Bobbio (No. 60), 7.04.2016, 3.

their dirtiness. They are paved with few, disconnected and irregular stones, where fetid, blackish waters stagnate permanently.”¹⁰⁵ Although that certainly does not do justice to the state of the cités for fifty years, former occupants were quick to acknowledge that –as one put it bluntly– “*tout était moche*.”¹⁰⁶

Inside, these unsightly constructions evolved constantly, through largely anarchic architectural metamorphoses. One reason for this was that before 1902, construction and destruction permits were not required by law, and the new rules were only loosely enforced in following years.¹⁰⁷ One of the surviving permit procedures concerns a new building at No. 98, commissioned by Louise’s heirs in 1903, which is still standing today. A sound, if not especially graceful, construction, it was immediately coveted by families with a little more income than those at 96, 100 and 102. There were toilets on the upper floors, and its one-bedroom apartments were significantly larger, at around 28 square meter, than their equivalents in the cités. From that moment on, No. 98 started to drift away, materially and symbolically, from the rest of the cités.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, “La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia,” *Nuova antologia. Rivista di lettere, scienze ed arti*, Vol. 37 (1902), No. 723, 1.02.1902, 471.

¹⁰⁶ Int. Gallacio (No. 56), 1.12.2016. Born in 1934, Mme Gallacio lived at 100 av. Wilson between 1940 and 1944 (“everything was ugly”).

¹⁰⁷ Law of 15.02.1902, art. 11.

¹⁰⁸ By the 1930s, the contrast had become starker. M. Greco, born at No. 100 in 1933, recalls: “*Le 98, c’était luxe par rapport au 96 et au 100. Il y avait des tapis, c’était un bel immeuble*.” Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016. (“Compared with Nos. 96 and 100, No. 98 was a fine place. There were carpets, it was a beautiful building.”)



*Figure 13: Drawing of the new building at No. 98
by the architect E. Rigaud, 1903*

The earlier history of the property can be summed up as follows. At No. 96-98, Louise Versigny, who had rented the land in the early 1860s from Ms. Trézel's sister as a *locataire principal**, sublet it for fifteen years to a subtenant in 1864. In 1864 and 1865, that tenant (and a successor to whom he sold the lease shortly after) erected two parallel houses, one on the Avenue de Paris and the other one behind it: the building on the avenue had cellars, a ground floor that would later be divided into six shops, and three upper floors on one part of it and two on the other; after a small courtyard, the second, parallel building was also dissymmetrical with two floors on one half and just one on the other. Subsequently, smaller constructions were built at the back of the courtyard. They were supposed to be torn down at the end of the lease to restore the land in its original, agricultural state. In 1878, Louise Versigny renewed the subleasing contract for another fifteen years, but after her tenant's death in 1883 and a dispute between his heirs, the sublease was sold by auction. The highest bidder turned out to

be Louise herself: for 7,000 fr., she reunited the fruition of the land and that of the houses, which at the time brought in 6,000 fr. of rents a year. In 1895, Louise finally bought the land at No. 96-98 (for 64,750 fr.), as she had done in 1880 for the plot at No. 100-102. There as well, she had first been a *locataire principal** and had sublet the land to others, who had erected most of the houses she eventually acquired for herself.¹⁰⁹

Until the early 1900s, the four addresses were still perceived as one. Evidence of this can be found in countless instances where people technically living at one address referred to another.¹¹⁰ A split of ownership in late 1902, followed by the erection of new constructions, resulted in the division of the plot into three different units: Nos. 100 and 102 remained very much united¹¹¹; No. 98 stood apart, with its own courtyard; No. 96 gradually became a distinct cité itself.

From the late 1900s, the addresses grew more and more different from each other in the minds of inhabitants. The inside of No. 100 is remembered as being quite open and accessible to passers-by –although its aspect remained far from enticing. By contrast, non-residents would almost never enter No. 96. Inhabitants from a later period remember two worlds very much apart from each other.¹¹² A similar disparity applied to the débits from an early stage. The one at No. 102 was always a large place,

¹⁰⁹ See *Affiches parisiennes et départementales*, Vol. 51, No. 18,438, 10.10.1868, Listing No. 18135; FNA, MC/ET/XXXVIII/1224, Minutes de Me Gamard, “Cahier des charges...,” *doc. cit.*, 12.10.1883; AD93, 4Q5 7840, acte 4, 21.06.1895, Vente par Mme veuve Bourges à Mlle Versigny.

¹¹⁰ See www.paris-tenement.eu (using Google Chrome), “General table 96-102,” tab “Life events.”

¹¹¹ The bar-hotel had its own front door, but shared the courtyard with No. 100. People whose address was No. 102 were not necessarily all hotel clients. In the 1880s and 1890s, the hotel had not yet expanded to the horseshoe-shaped building immediately behind the house where the restaurant was (see below, figures 14 and 15). Hotel clients were initially accommodated on the upper floor of the front building. Then, once the second building hosted the hotel rooms, there remained nonetheless a couple of apartments at ground level but accessible from the courtyard at No. 100, including the *loge de concierge* (see below, figure 20; also, censuses, and AD93, D4P4, 57, *doc. cit.*)

¹¹² Technically one could jump the wall between the two cités, but few ever did (Int. Verrecchia, No. 39, 4.09.2016).

where strangers would frequently be seen. Much smaller, the bar at No. 96 only had a few chairs, and mainly catered to residents and their neighbours.

The following plans, based on rare originals unearthed in notary records and land register archives, give a clear sense of the periodic modifications of the inner disposition of the cités.

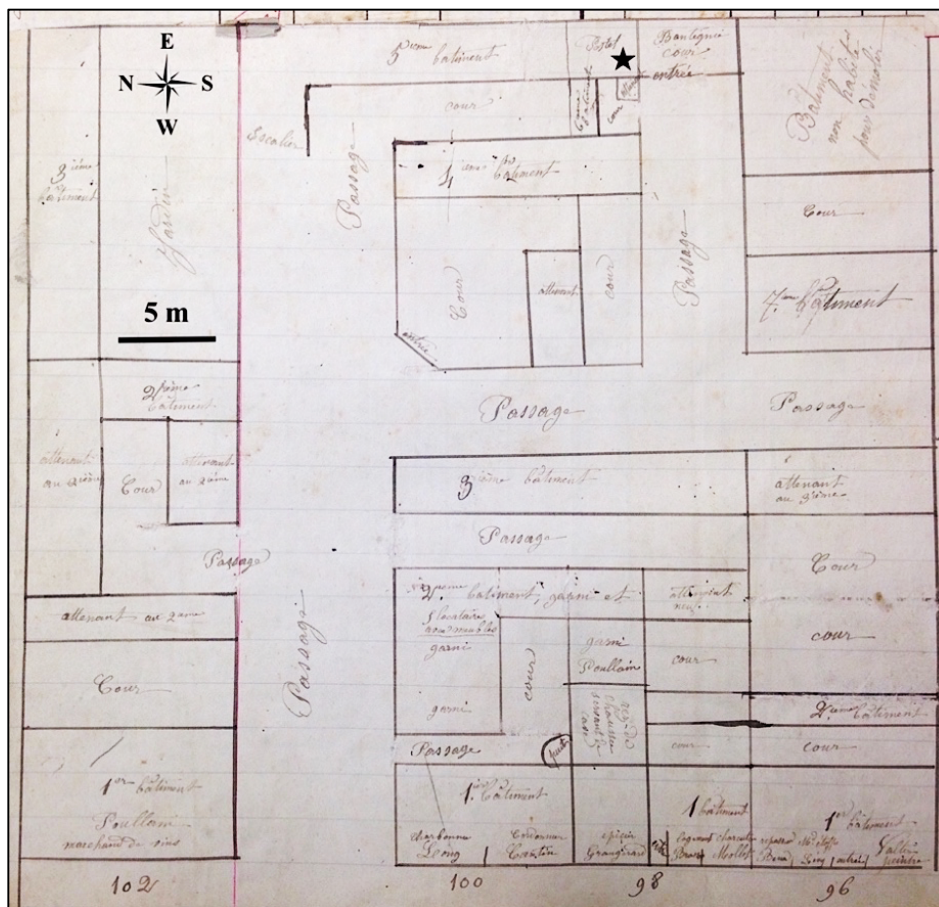


Figure 14: Detailed plan of the cités, 1883¹¹³

¹¹³ The date, unspecified in the source, has been inferred from the tenants' names. The construction marked with a star is the only one that Louise Versigny did not yet own by that date. Note, among other details, the well located on the south-western corner of the narrow passage immediately to the right when entering No. 100.

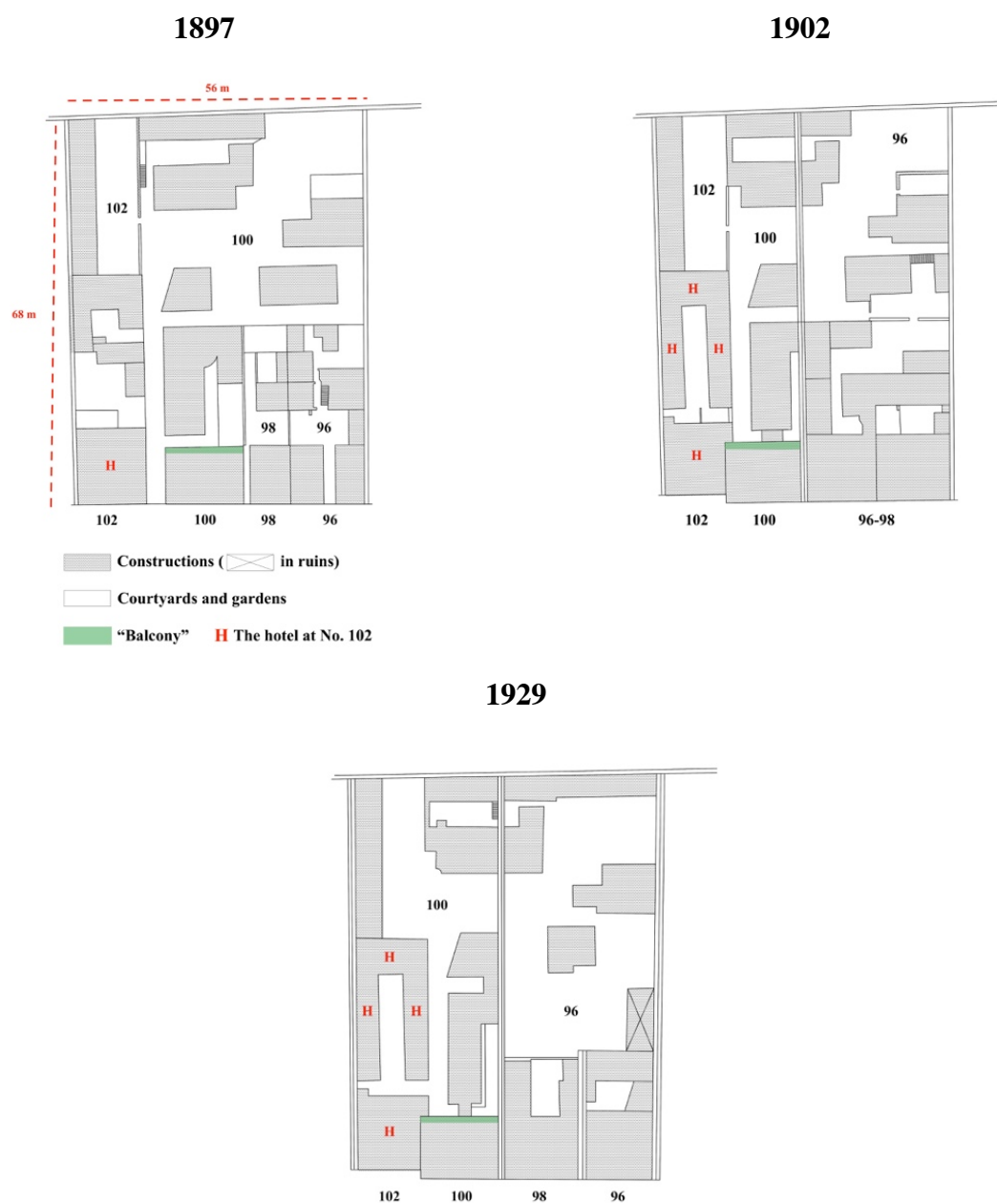


Figure 15: The structural evolution of the cités, 1897-1929¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ Another plan of No. 100-102 in 1957 exists in SDMA, 40 AC 75, 100-102 Av. du Président-Wilson, which highlights the poor state of all constructions in the courtyard.

Combined with written and oral sources, these cartographic documents yield precious information about the characteristics of the cités. Unremarkable façades on the avenue; deceptively narrow entrances, paved only on the first meters; gardens slowly giving way to trodden earth and patches of wild grass; wooden shacks and depots for various merchants.¹¹⁵ Between the houses, clothes lines, rabbit hutches covered with sheet-metal roofs, henhouses –and the odd rock, on which people could trip and hurt themselves.¹¹⁶

For years, Louise Versigny rented out a parcel at No. 100-102 to carters who kept their horses in a stable, and another to a milkman for his cows.¹¹⁷ That, along with barking dogs and horses frequently stomping the paved sections of the passages, must have been noisy. But not as much as the inhabitants themselves. Shouts were common in courtyards, either from disputes or friendly calls, covering the steady beat of shoemaker's hammer and the never-ending baby cries. The wooden floor and stairs cracked constantly under people's clogs. Bars at the front often closed later than permitted, filling the night with loud voices, and occasionally accordion music.¹¹⁸ Nights were short, for the dairy shop and the charcuterie clanged ironware even before workers had to wake up, around 5:30. Only Sunday would bring relief: what locals remember most about Sundays is the silence, especially at mass time.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁵ FNA, MC/ET/XXXVIII/1224, Minutes de Me Gamard, "Cahier des charges pour parvenir à la vente d'un droit au bail de terrains sis à Saint-Denis, av. de Paris 96, et des constructions édifiées sur ces terrains," 12.10.1883. Over the years, a painter, a shoemaker, a wine-merchant owned small workshops or storage shacks in the courtyard, made of wooden boards and roofed with cardboard coated with bitumen.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*; AD93, 4U7/533, 1896, 14.10.1896, Dion c. époux Robert; *Le Matin*, 13.09.1900; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1087, 1102, 1121, 2002, 27.09.1907.

¹¹⁷ *La Presse*, 17.06.1874, Déclarations de faillites, Léonard, loueur de voitures; SDMA, 25Fi280, Enquêtes de commodo et d'incommodo, 29.09.1880. M. Ayral; AD93, 4U7/494, 21.07.1893, Bantegnie c. Versigny (lease signed on 15.04.1882).

¹¹⁸ APP, CB 92.17, 1920/828, 3.10.1920; CB 92.20, 1923/1227, 23.10.1923; CB 92.24, 1927/479, 28.03.1927

¹¹⁹ Int. Piacitelli (No. 49), 6.07.2016.

The construction of the multiple-storey buildings radically altered the face of the cités, long the preserve of low houses. Other architectural features were also intended to maximise inhabitable space. Over the passage at No. 100, for instance, at the back of the front building, a tenant of Louise's in the early 1880s erected another house, along with a wooden staircase and an inward-looking passage on the first floor.¹²⁰ This "balcony," as the residents themselves called it, provided them with a meeting space, from which they could also greet people going through the entrance passage.¹²¹



Figure 16: Mme Ponte, a resident at No. 100 since the late 1900s, on the "balcony" with a neighbour [1940-1950s]

Besides architectural rearrangements, changes of ownership had other consequences as well. Louise Versigny was very much a hands-on owner, and relentlessly micromanaged her property.¹²² Like most landlords of her era, Louise had

¹²⁰ AD93, 4Q5, vol. 6170, Acte 6, 13.11.1886, Vente par M. et Mme Camus à Mlle Versigny ("which is reached by a staircase, wooden balconies and balustrades, zinc-covered roof spaces").

¹²¹ See figure 15.

¹²² See AD93, 4U7/450-542. Between 1880 and 1897, Louise went 23 times in person to the *Justice de paix* for disputes over rents; 32 other times she was represented by her proxy (and that does not include hearings for seizure procedures: see 4U7/353-4). When Louise left for Paris in mid-1897, she rented her property in its entirety to a *locataire principal* in charge of subletting each apartment unit.

lived there from the start. Tenants would come to her to curry favours, essentially delays and loans.¹²³ But after being robbed at night, she found the situation untenable, and left.¹²⁴ After her accidental death in 1901, the property was split between her two heirs, who engaged in a vast demolition and reconstruction of the lesser units in the courtyards. Neither M. Lutel, the head of a local lorry company who acquired the northern half on auction in 1907, nor Louise's great-niece Mme Barillier, who had inherited No. 96 and No. 98, had little time to spare with their tenants.¹²⁵ In the 1920s, Mme Barillier spent much of her time in Normandy and on the Côte d'Azur, mostly unresponsive to correspondence from the Mayor of Saint-Denis.¹²⁶ Efforts to recover outstanding rents or evict indelicate occupants became rare. The money-making days of the cités were over.

And yet the most consequential evolution that affected the cités was another one: decay. Several factors contributed to it. First, the unwillingness of landlords to keep up with the necessary works and repairs. Early traces indicate that Louise herself could at times balk at making the necessary expenses.¹²⁷ But the situation rapidly worsened after 1914. The official moratorium on rents imposed at the outbreak of the war further reduced the incentives to maintain the property.¹²⁸ At the end of the conflict, many

¹²³ AD93, 4U7/477, 11.09.1891, Versigny c. Borne; see Roger-Henri Guerrand, *Propriétaires et locataires. Les origines du logement social en France, 1850-1914*, Paris: Quintette, 1987.

¹²⁴ AVP, D1U6 508, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 14.08.1894, Gering, Baudel, Sinnig; *Le Petit Parisien*, 12.06.1894, 16.06.1894.

¹²⁵ On the auction, see Service de la propriété foncière (SPF), Auxerre 1, Archives du 5^e bureau des hypothèques de la Seine, Vol. 343, No. 3, 7.01.1908, Transcription du jugement d'adjudication rendu le 14.11.1907 portant sur les immeubles des 100 et 102 avenue de Paris à la Plaine-Saint-Denis, "Cahier des charges." The husband of Louise's great-niece, Ernest Barillier, was a butcher turned influential councilman in Paris. A notorious *antidreyfusard*, he served time in jail for suspicion of plotting to overthrow the Republic (see i. a. *Le Petit Parisien*, 4.01.1900).

¹²⁶ SDMA, 2 AC W 9, Av. Wilson 96, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Mandé to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 22.07.1920.

¹²⁷ AD93, 4U7/540, 21.05.1897, Versigny c. Billotte.

¹²⁸ Starting on 14.08.1914, the French government issued decrees that gave extra delays of 90 days to tenants for them to pay their rents (without further justification in the case of rents below 600 francs, which was the case of the cités). Those delays were constantly extended until 1918. The law of 9.03.1918 repealed the moratorium, but provided that rents predating the start of the war could not be raised. See Loïc Bonneval *et al.*, *Les Politiques publiques de contrôle des loyers, comparaisons*

residents remained effectively exempt from rent, because of structural damages suffered by their dwellings.



Figure 17: A view of the cités from the north, 1914¹²⁹

While the cités were spared by German planes and the Big Bertha,¹³⁰ they were affected by the explosion of 15 million grenades in La Courneuve on March 15, 1918. In the Plaine, virtually all windows were blown out, causing minor cuts to many.¹³¹ So

internationales et enseignements historiques (1914-2014), Lyon: Ministère de l'égalité des territoires et du logement, 2015, 15–34.

¹²⁹ On the left side, the hôtel de l'Oise is M. Poullain's bar-hotel at No. 102; he is very probably the tall figure standing on the doorstep. The entrance pathway immediately to the left of the tree is No. 100, while the door of No. 98 is visible between the two horse carts, and that of No. 96 right after the load of casks.

¹³⁰ Both inflicted damage on nearby constructions. See SDMA, CT352, "Liste des demandes pour dommages causés par avions et obus," no date [after August 1918]; SDMA, CT930, "État des victimes civiles des bombardements et du gros canon," no date [First World War].

¹³¹ See SDMA, CT344, and André Savoye, "La vie quotidienne dans la banlieue Nord et Nord-Ouest de Paris pendant la Grande Guerre," doctoral diss., University of Paris IV, 2007, 67–71. Closer to the site of the accident, thirty-three died and thousands were injured.

strong were the vibrations from the explosion that one of the buildings in the courtyard at No. 96 was shaken to the point of collapse.

For residents at No. 96, a direct consequence was that the lavatory in the courtyard was out of order –and remained thus for the next two years. For six families, like the one of Antonia Tarsia, aged 7, and her Italian parents, it was even worse: they had to go away and find another place to live.¹³² By that time, all the residents at No. 98 were French nationals, while all the inhabitants of the collapsed building at No. 96 were foreigners. That instance was one of the first in which a tangible difference in material situation between the addresses produced a visible, ethnonational divide.

From that severe blow, No. 96 never quite recovered.¹³³ Along with the rubble of the collapsed buildings (which would not be cleared until they were joined by new debris from bombings in 1944), the courtyard went on to host a pile of metalwork dumped by a nearby factory, after its owner acquired the property in the mid 1920s. This displeasing symbol reminded residents for years of a vicious circle: since they paid little or no rent, no one bothered to take care of the building. In addition, it entailed one of the many reconfigurations of the relation between the buildings and their occupants. On the one hand, the pile of materials further isolated the families at the back of the courtyard. On the other hand, it provided an opportunity for children to appropriate that new spatial elements and integrate it into their sense of belonging. While the courtyard at No. 100 was arranged as a football ground, the metal heap at No. 96 became a treasured place for hide-and-seek.¹³⁴

¹³² SDMA, 2 AC W 9, “96 av. Wilson”; SDMA, 1 F 27, 1911 Census, vol. 1, 301–6; AD93, DR7 76, Dommages de guerre, Saint-Denis, Note, 13.10.1924; AD93, 1E66/267, Saint-Denis, births, 1911, Vol. 1, No. 119, 25.01.1911, Antoinette Lucie Tarsia.

¹³³ Because it was in partial ruins, it was bought for next to nothing by M. Prieur, the founder and head of a company located in rue Proudhon, who sought cheap solutions of lodging for his workers. See FNA, MC/RE/CXIX/27, Me Faÿ, 6.03.1920–29.06.1928, No. 508, 12.05.1925.

¹³⁴ Int. Greco (No. 42), 24.04.2016; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018. Sometime in the 1920s or 1930s, a wall at the back of No. 100 was painted with a white rectangle figuring football goal posts. Children could see their elder, from a local club, gather at No. 102 after games. And it was Domenica Carbone, at No. 100, who was in charge of cleaning the players’ socks (Int. Haussy, No. 32, 19.04.2016).

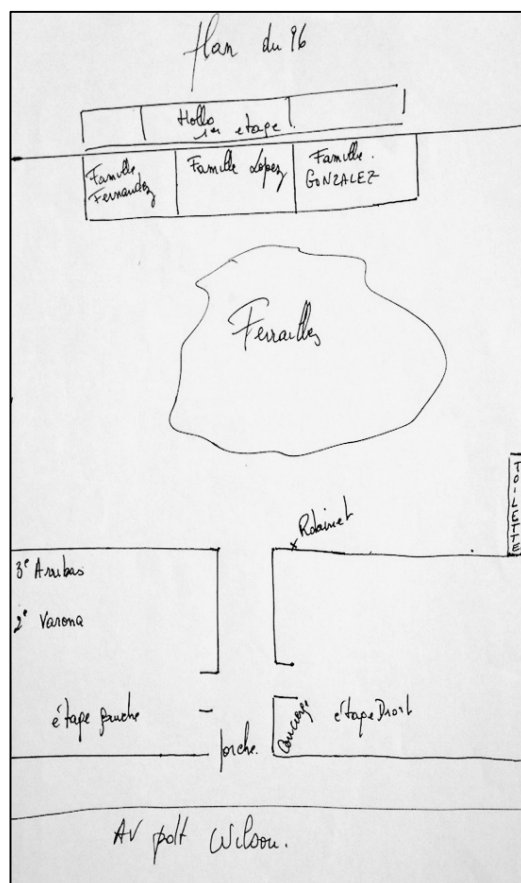


Figure 18: A plan of No. 96 based on the recollections of Henri Gonzalez, born there in 1932¹³⁵

Deterioration could bond the tenants together, but also drive a wedge between them.¹³⁶ This ambivalence appears in the upset letters they addressed to the authorities. However, there is no explicit evidence that those complaints ever translated into ethnonational or class-based resentment. When the residents at No. 98 protested, for

¹³⁵ The drawing is by Mr. Gonzalez's son, Stéphane Gonzalez. The pile of metal waste is identified by the word "ferrailles." Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018.

¹³⁶ On this ambivalent dynamic, see Gérard Jacquemet, "Belleville ouvrier à la Belle Époque," *Le Mouvement social*, Jan-March 1982, No. 118, 61–77. In later years, residents would file other collective protests against their landlords (see SDMA, 16 AC 5, av. Wilson 100–102).

instance, against a stench emanating from No. 100, they blamed it on the insufficient size of the chimneys at No. 100, not on their poorer neighbours themselves.¹³⁷

Here is how one resident at No. 100 from Extremadura put it to the Mayor of Saint-Denis in 1922. Since his family had moved in three years earlier, he wrote, “*je n’ai jamais vu de réparations, les cabinets d’aisance n’ont aucune chasse d’eau, les plafonds ne tiennent plus laisse [sic] passer l’eau des locataires qui en répandent car les parquets sont également très mauvais et cet eau [sic] suinte également sur les murs donc je déclare que mon logement au rez-de-chaussée est complètement insalubre ainsi que l’immeuble.*”¹³⁸ As we can see, some tenants were not beyond reproach in his view, but they were not identified further. The people to blame were the landlord, and the municipality who failed to enforce existing regulations. Furthermore, this complaint highlights how even the latest residents were not the passive victims of the state of the cités. On the contrary, they knew they had options at their disposal to try and change their situations for the better. Their perception of the cités never quite matched the resigned and condescending view of external observers.

Inside the apartments

What lay behind the doors of the residents’ lodgings is difficult to document. For one thing, few iconographic traces survive.¹³⁹ We do know that most residents lived in one or two-bedroom apartments¹⁴⁰ and had only little furniture of their own, and

¹³⁷ SDMA, 16 AC 5, av. Wilson 100, Letter from the tenants at No. 98 avenue Wilson to the Director of the Hygiene Service of Saint-Denis, 7.12.1936.

¹³⁸ SDMA, 16 AC 5, Av. Wilson 100, Letter from M. Alvarez, 100 Av. Wilson, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.07.1922. (“I have never seen any repair, the lavatories have no flush, ceilings do not hold anymore and through them leaks the water from the tenants who spill some because the wooden floor are also in a very poor state and this water seeps also through the walls, so I declare that my apartment on ground floor is completely unfit for habitation and so is the building.”)

¹³⁹ The rare pictures that we came across are in private hands, and showed very little of the apartments behind human subjects.

¹⁴⁰ This meant a surface of 15 to 20 square meters in total (Alain Faure, “Comment se logeait le peuple parisien à la Belle Époque,” *Vingtième siècle*, No. 64 (Oct.-Dec. 1999), 41–51). Rooms at No. 102 had a surface of 6 square meters, and in the 1950s, they had windows of two by two meters

generally none of any particular value. Traditional sources that document material possessions are of little use: less than 0.5% of deaths in the cités led to succession declarations, and almost none to an inventory.¹⁴¹

Better clues are to be found in judicial and police records. In August 1914, a family of six at No. 96 had “*un lit de cuivre complet, un lit pliant complet, un lit d’enfant, un berceau, deux tables carrées, sept chaises, un tonneau, un poêle neuf, un baquet pour laver le linge, deux marmites de cuisson, une lampe, une marmite, deux grands plats, quatre assiettes, six cuillers, six fourchettes, quatre planches d’un mètre et deux de deux mètres, deux matelas en laine.*”¹⁴² Their next-door neighbours had almost the same objects, with the addition of a cupboard.¹⁴³ At No. 100, another family possessed a small, white wooden table.¹⁴⁴

The most common decorations were family photographs and crucifixes. On the tables often lay the bread and provisions for the day.¹⁴⁵ Windows were usually sealed, and dampness was common.¹⁴⁶ Walls were supposed to be whitewashed, but their surface frequently covered in patches of mildew. They were not cleaner at residents’

(“Enquête du bureau municipal d’hygiène sur le logement réservé à M. Pirollo Luigi, 9.10.1953,” in SDMA, 16 AC 5, “Avenue du Président-Wilson,” 100–102). Their furnishing certainly resembled what prevailed in other *garnis** of Saint-Denis, of which we have rare descriptions: an iron bed with a small, worn and greasy quilt, a chest, a mirror, a small table and two chairs (Jacques Valdour, *La Vie ouvrière...*, *op. cit.*, 3–4).

¹⁴¹ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, “Successions.” A rare declaration from the 1920s, filed by the heirs of a former resident who had worked almost four decades at Legras, shows that his possessions included more than 2,000 fr. in life savings; and yet it mentioned no furniture or other objects of sufficient value (AD93, 1729W102, 1927–28, Chrétien Dorflinger, deceased on 30.08.1923, declaration on 8.12.1927, No. 512).

¹⁴² AD93, 4U7/735–6, 1920, 6.02.1920, 9.04.1920, Damata (“Damoto”) c. Veuve Barillier (“a full copper bed, a full folding bed, a child ben, a cradle, two square tables, seven chairs, a cask, a brand-new stove, a tub for washing clothes, two cooking pots, a lamp, a pot, two big dishes, four plates, six spoons, six forks, four one-meter boards of and two two-meter ones, two wool mattresses”).

¹⁴³ AD93, 4U7/735, 1920 (1), 6.02.1920, Pirollo c. Veuve Barillier; 4U7/736, 9.04.1920, Pirollo c. Veuve Barillier.

¹⁴⁴ AD93, 4U7/723, 1916 (3), 27.10.1916, Veuve Gréco c. Lutel.

¹⁴⁵ Jean Lemoine, “L’émigration bretonne à Paris,” *art. cit.*, 179.

¹⁴⁶ See e.g. AD93, 4U7/635, 7.04.1905, 15.04.1905, Siméon c. Barillier, about an apartment at No. 96 in 1905. An investigation showed that the bedroom was “*dans un état d’humidité de nature à incommoder*” (“in a bothering state of dampness”).

who ran furnished lodgings, despite the particular requirements entailed by that activity.¹⁴⁷

With smells of humidity mingled those, more inviting, from cooking. Stews of vegetable and potatoes and thick bean soups were popular in every apartment. At times, residents purchased finer products from the charcuterie at No. 98.¹⁴⁸ Those included ham, salami, bacon, lard, pâté, and sardines in oil.¹⁴⁹ In the mid-1920s, at a nearby grocery newly acquired by a resident at No. 100 and his brother, dried pasta would be sold by the tens of kilos, along with tomato sauce, chickpeas, dried codfish, coffee and chocolate.¹⁵⁰ Mme Orsi, a longtime resident at No. 100 from the early 1900s, is remembered for her *pesto*, which passers-by could get a whiff of from the sidewalk on the Avenue.¹⁵¹

And yet the most persisting smell came from the toilets on the ground floor. Although landlords were quick to put the blame on residents –who kept clogging the pipes with various objects over the years– the massive disproportion between the number of outhouses and the demography of the cités was bound to create a hygiene problem. There were only three WC for 50 families at No. 100 in the late 1910s; at

¹⁴⁷ AD93, 4U7/975, 981, 1009, 1020, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbaux c. Rodi (No. 102), Tedeschi (No. 100), Palma (No. 100), Pirolli (No. 100), 23.01.1899, 18.01.1900, 26.11.1903, 16.08.1905. About similar lodgings in Aubervilliers, Léon Bonneff wrote: “*Les escaliers ont parfois des soutiens ou des réparations de fortune et les murs sont blanchis par endroits seulement. C’est quand un locataire s’est senti ‘courageux’ quelque dimanche qu’il pleuvait et a décidé de blanchir le corridor lui-même, à ses frais, parce que ‘ça le dégoûtait de voir ça’ et que ce grippe-sous de propriétaire ne voulait pas faire blanchir des murs noirs comme du charbon (Aubervilliers (roman), op. cit., 1922–3, 34).*”

¹⁴⁸ Civil lawsuits at the Justice de Paix contain direct evidence of the purchases made by residents, on credit, at the charcuterie. See e.g. AD93, 4U7/557, 7.10.1898, Delamotte c. Moutier.

¹⁴⁹ “Inventaire des marchandises du fonds de charcuterie sis à la Plaine-Saint-Denis, 98 av. du Pt Wilson, vendu par M. Pillard à M. Gascard,” in AD93, 1739W13, Bureau de l’enregistrement fiscal de Saint-Denis, actes sous seings privés, 15.01.1922, enr. 21.01.1922; “Inventaire des marchandises reprises par M. et Mme Chalmel, acquéreurs du fonds de commerce de charcuterie et comestibles de M. et Mme Gascard,” in AD93, 1739W41, Actes sous seings privés, 1930, 17.10.1930, enr. 21.10.1930.

¹⁵⁰ “État des marchandises existant dans le fonds de commerce de M. Vacca le 1.04.1925, jour de la prise de possession par MM. Louis et Justin Pirolli,” in AD93, 1739W25, Actes sous seings privés, 1925, 1.04.1925, enr. 8.04.1925.

¹⁵¹ Int. Orsi (No. 34), 29.07.2016.

No. 96, there were five, but three of them were out of order.¹⁵² As for water, things were not better. “*Il n’y a qu’un robinet à l’eau pour tous les ménages,*” one tenant complained, “*et la concierge ne l’ouvre que de neuf heures à onze heures et l’après-midi de quatre à six heures. Mais encore bien souvent la concierge dit que le robinet est avarié et l’enlève, de ce fait nous sommes encore quelques jours sans eau.*”¹⁵³ In 1930, No. 96 was officially declared unfit for habitation by the municipality.¹⁵⁴

To outsiders, No. 100 and 96 became synonymous with dirtiness, even though other overcrowded buildings in the area were hardly in better shape.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, ethno-national boundaries came to be associated with those appalling material conditions, even from supposedly friendly voices. Thinking of No. 100, the socialist MP Jean Allemane referred to “*ces malheureux Italiens*” from the Plaine glassworks, who live “*dans des conditions d’existence anormales.*”¹⁵⁶ Several years later, a similar parallel was drawn by the conservative outlet *La Liberté*. At No. 96, little Spanish glass workers were reported as living “*sordidement, dans la saleté la plus repoussante.*” The article clearly conflated their foreignness and their squalid life conditions.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² SDMA, 16AC5, Av. Wilson 100, Letter from Henri Duclermortier to the Préfet de la Seine, 3.05.1922; SDMA, 2ACW9, 96 Av. Wilson, Report from the Bureau d’hygiène after an inspection on 21.05.1920. On the hygiene conditions in Saint-Denis more broadly, see Geneviève Royer, “*Ville et santé en France et en Allemagne: esquisse d’une histoire comparée. Habitat ouvrier et hygiène à Saint-Denis et Duisbourg du milieu du XIX^e siècle à la veille de la Première Guerre mondiale,*” master’s thesis in history, EHESS, 1998.

¹⁵³ SDMA, 16AC5, Av. Wilson 100, Letter from Henri Duclermortier to the Préfet de la Seine, 3.05.1922. (“There is only one water tap for all the residents, and the concierge only turns it on from nine to eleven and in the afternoon from four to six. But also quite often she says that the tap is damaged and takes it away, and as a consequence we spend a few days without water”).

¹⁵⁴ SDMA, 2ACW9, 96 Av. Wilson, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to M. and Mme Stéphanus, 11.02.1930. All constructions were not equal in that regard; lower houses in the courtyard were in a poorer state than the buildings at the front. This declaration did not automatically force out residents.

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. SDMA, CT263, Collective letter from the residents of the rue Trézel to the Préfet de police 2.11.1918; SDMA, 2ACW9, 64 av. Wilson; 84 av. Wilson. “*Le 100 avait une drôle de réputation,*” a local born in 1936 remembered (Int. Rongione, No. 28, 2.12.2016 – “No. 100 had an odd reputation”). According to another, born in 1934: “*Le 100, cela faisait une sale impression... c’était voyou et pauvre.*” (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016 – “No. 100 made a bad impression... it was loutish and poor”).

¹⁵⁶ *J.O.R.F., Débats parlementaires, Chambre des députés*, 25.11.1901, 2332 (“In abnormal conditions of existence.”)

¹⁵⁷ *La Liberté*, 2.11.1912. (“Sordidly, in the most revolting filth” and in “deplorable conditions”).

And yet many families refused to compromise on hygiene. “*Mon père était très soucieux de notre hygiène,*” remembered one former resident of Italian descent.¹⁵⁸ There is hardly any evidence to suggest that in their rural regions of origin, residents were used to live in significantly dirtier conditions, in spite of their modest means.¹⁵⁹ At a minimum, people would take a footbath in a pot in the kitchen every week. When it did run from the tap, water was spared, especially hot water because of the time it took to heat it on the coal-stove. As for washing clothes, it was such a hard work for women that most would only change clothes on Sundays.¹⁶⁰

The way people reacted against the decay in later years showed that almost no family endured the situation without protest, even when they could not afford to live elsewhere.¹⁶¹ Fortunately, things did improve over time, at least on some counts. At the lower end of our period, interiors started to look better. A photographic view from the early 1930s of the apartment of a former resident at No. 100, who now lived in the nearby impasse Chaudron, must have closely resembled the apartments in the soundest parts of the cités.¹⁶² By that time, walls were hidden behind fabric coverings, and

¹⁵⁸ Int. Rongione (No. 50), 21.07.2016 (“My father was very particular about our hygiene”).

¹⁵⁹ On the contrary, hygiene regulations had already been passed and enforced in their villages. See e.g. Ayuntamiento del Valle de Valdebezana, *Ordenanzas municipales*, Burgos: Imprenta y estereotipia de Polo, 1899, p. 40, Higiene de las habitaciones, ordenanza del 28.03.1898, art. 187, requiring a “*perfecto estado de limpieza*.”

¹⁶⁰ MA Saint-Ouen, LOC 75, H. Bertrand, *Souvenirs du début du siècle* [unpublished].

¹⁶¹ A 1904 poem about Saint-Denis illustrated this common tension between the aspiration to hygiene and an inescapable degree of soot and dirt: “*Pour moi, v’là la question sociale / Ça m’est égal de turbiner / Mais, j’veux pas avoir la gueul’ sale / Malgré que j’soy’ débarbouillé.*” (Fabrice Delphi, “Saint-Denis-la-Suie,” in *Outre-fortifs, impressions de la banlieue*, Paris: Malot, 1904, 7: “For me, here is the social problem / I don’t care to slog away / But I don’t want my face to remain dirty / Even when I’ve washed it.”)

¹⁶² The photograph on figure 19 roughly matches the recollection of former residents. M. Greco, who grew up in a family of five at the back of No. 100 in the 1930s in a one-bedroom apartment, remembered that in the main room, there was “*un sceau pour l’eau, la cuisinière, puis le buffet et la table.*” Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016 (“a bucket for water, the cooker, then the dresser and the table”). As for his neighbour Mme Van Kerkhove née Carnevale, born at No. 100 in 1929, she said that the parents and the two children slept in the main room, which had “*une armoire un peu bancale et une grande commode*” (“a rickety cupboard and a large chest of drawer”), “*une cuisinière*” (“a cooker”), “*une petite table que mon père avait faite, pour pouvoir poser de l’eau,*” (“a small table that my father had made so that we could put some water on it”) and a “*réchaud à alcool à brûler*” (“a

manual workers were making enough to own, on top of their iron beds, a cupboard, a chiffonier, and possibly a dresser. The proportions of one-bedroom apartments had not changed though. In this case, it had only 12.5 square meters.

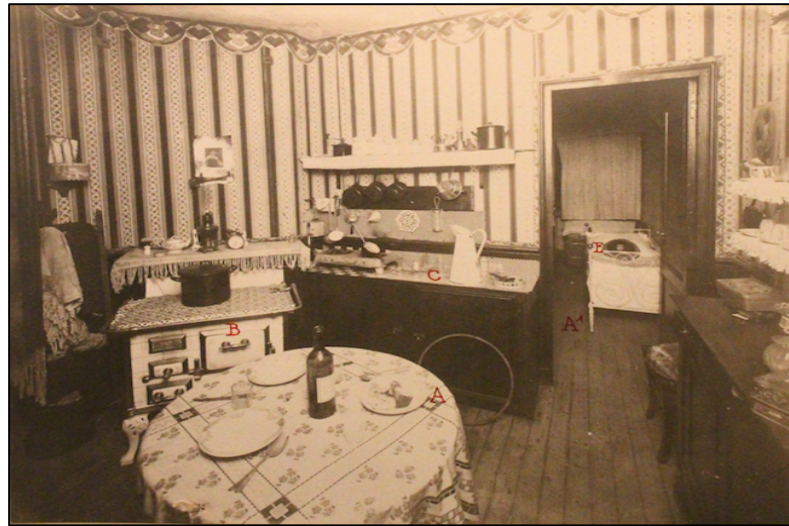


Figure 19: The interior of Rufo and Julia López, impasse Chaudron, 1934¹⁶³

Shared spaces, shared times

Residents did not interact with their material environment in a vacuum; they had to share space with others. Bits of information about the life inside the lodgings corroborate existing insights from sociologists and anthropologists.¹⁶⁴ At the dinner table, everyone had their spot. If the table had a shorter side, it would be occupied by fathers. They were the most static figures, while women and children roamed around

spirit stove"). In the other room were "*un buffet, une table et quatre chaises*" ("a dresser, a table and four chairs"). Int. Van Kerkhove (No. 54), 14.09.2016.

¹⁶³ Apartment of Rufo López and his wife Julia López née González, 30 impasse Chaudron, picture and plan realised by the police on 12.09.1934.

¹⁶⁴ Jean-Claude Kaufmann, *La Chaleur du foyer. Analyse du repli domestique*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1988; Irene Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, New York (NY): Syracuse University Press, 1999. See also, Jean-François Staszak, "L'espace domestique: pour une géographie de l'intérieur," *Annales de géographie*, Vol. 110 (2001), No. 620, 339–63.

the apartment.¹⁶⁵ In practice, family members in the cités were often missing at dinner time –whether they were resting before night shifts, out in the streets with acquaintances, or at a nearby *débit**.¹⁶⁶

Before the 1930s, residents did not have electricity nor gas, except at No. 98.¹⁶⁷ Only oil lamps lit up apartments, even in afternoons, when the single windows were not letting through enough daylight. At night, apart from a circle of light around the table, dwellings were in the dark. Living rooms were almost all turned into bedrooms by unfolding the children's and lodgers' *lit-cages**.¹⁶⁸ A genuine yearning for intimacy proved hard to fulfil due to the limited room available.¹⁶⁹

The children's most common playground was the avenue itself. Cup-and-ball, tops, marbles, jacks or balls were played under the trees. Boys would go on the slide down the ditch of the "*fortifs*"; girls, subject to more parental restrictions, remained closer to the cités.¹⁷⁰ All would buy ice creams and chips in paper cones.¹⁷¹ Until the early 1900s, there were no automobiles. But the traffic on the Avenue was already intense, with horse-drawn trams and carts passing frequently. Throughout the period, vehicles took a heavy toll on the residents' children.¹⁷²

The space distribution of the cités left a distinctive mark on people's encounters. Passing through the pathway and front door of No. 96, for instance, and avoiding

¹⁶⁵ Monique Eleb-Vidal, Anne Debarre, *L'Invention de l'habitation moderne: Paris, 1880-1914*, Paris: Hazan, 1995.

¹⁶⁶ See e.g. CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918; CB 92.21, 1925/170, 289 bis, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925.

¹⁶⁷ SDMA, 16 AC 5, "Avenue du Président-Wilson," 100–102; 40 AC 74, Av. Wilson 96, 98.

¹⁶⁸ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016.

¹⁶⁹ Alain Faure, "Comment se logeait...", *art. cit.*, 45.

¹⁷⁰ APP, CB 92.7, 1911/391, 5.05.1911; MA Saint-Ouen, cote LOC 75, H. Bertrand, *Souvenirs du début du siècle* [unpublished].

¹⁷¹ SDMA, Tissot Archives, 21 S 055 002, No. 1, 3.

¹⁷² See the injuries and deaths of children of the cités due to traffic accidents on the Avenue: APP, CB 92.6, 1910/812, 22.09.1910; CB 92.9, 1913/425, 8-9.05.1913; CB 92.9, 1913/529, 4.06.1913; CB 92.18, 1922/88, 25-30.01.1922; CB 92.23, 1926/1352, 10.08.1926-13.09.1926; 92.26, 1928/1443, 20.09.1928.

someone committed to blocking the way, was impossible. Cases of a slapped child, and later of two slain adults, confirm as much.¹⁷³ Another example was the double access to the hotel at No. 102, through the bar or from the passage at No. 100. It allowed people to escape or steal from others without being seen.¹⁷⁴

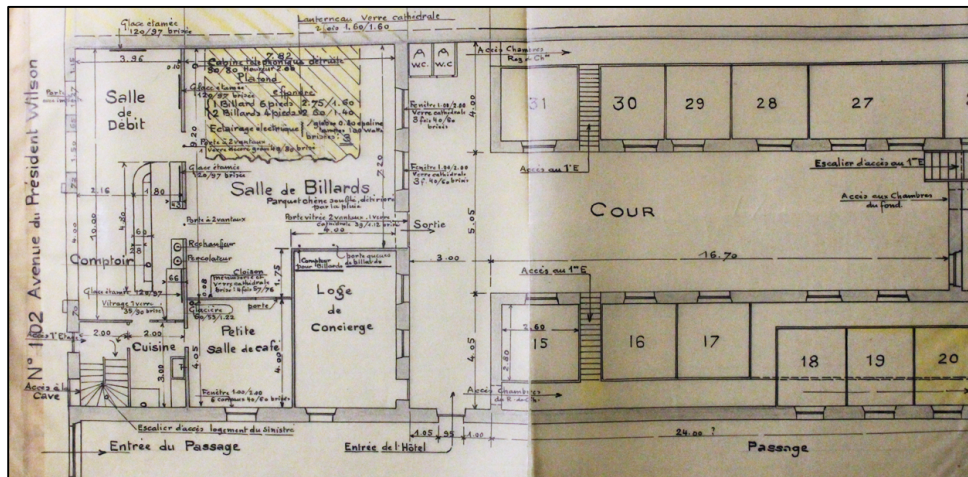


Figure 20: Plan of the bar-hotel at No. 102, 1945

Cellars could serve as hiding-places, at least for stolen goods.¹⁷⁵ They may also have provided shelter during the bombings of the First World War, as they would during the Second.¹⁷⁶ On the tin roofs, in principle, no one would try to climb, except murderers in a hurry to flee.¹⁷⁷ As for the sidewalk right outside the buildings, or the shade under the trees, elderly people became used to sit on chairs for long hours. That tradition, which would last until the 1960s, is already visible on the following photograph of the cités, taken before the Great War.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1042, 8.09.1907; CB 92.11, 1915/152, 8.04.1915; CB 92.21, 1925/746, 2.06.1925.

¹⁷⁴ APP, CB 92.2, 1905/826, 21.08.1905.

¹⁷⁵ APP, CB 92.14, 1917/639, 19.06.1917-3.07.1917.

¹⁷⁶ SDMA, CT352, "Liste des demandes pour dommages causés par avions et obus," no date [after August 1918].

¹⁷⁷ *Le Matin*, 29.09.1900; *Le Rappel*, 30.09.1900.

¹⁷⁸ Int. Bouchard (No. 16), 17.04.2016; Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016; Int. Van Kerckhove (No. 54), 4.09.2016.



*Figure 21: The cités viewed from the south, before the Great War*¹⁷⁹

Time was also an essential parameter in the residents' sense of place. Times of encounters, around work, chores, and leisure, were often simultaneous.¹⁸⁰ On a Thursday in 1890, after her shift at the packing service of the glass factory, Mathilde Garnier, a 24-year-old from No. 100, went down at 7 pm from her first-floor apartment. She was holding clothes to wash in one hand, and a bucket in the other. A neighbour of hers met her in the stairs, a discussion erupted, and Mathilde was eventually hit on the face with an iron. Their chore times, unsurprisingly,

¹⁷⁹ The arrow pointing to No. 100 was drawn by the sender.

¹⁸⁰ Yves Lequin, "Les citadins et leur vie quotidienne," in Georges Duby (ed.), *Histoire de la France urbaine*, vol. II: Maurice Agulhon (ed.), *La Ville de l'âge industriel. Le cycle haussmannien*, Paris: Seuil, 1983, 344.

overlapped.¹⁸¹ Going for groceries, cooking (twice a day), cleaning, sewing, doing the laundry were the work of mothers. When forced to do any of this, men complained.¹⁸² On Thursdays, women who went to the local wash house, on the other side of the Avenue, were helped by their daughters.¹⁸³ Boys were not entirely exempt from chores –they were seen fetching water in the courtyard–, but they were subject to lower expectations than their sisters.

Times of leisure often overlapped as well: Saturdays and Sunday nights for balls, Sunday afternoons for sport competitions, June, August and October for the local fairs.¹⁸⁴ In the Plaine's *débîts**, people constantly ran into colleagues and neighbours.¹⁸⁵ But the layers of time would sometimes diverge.¹⁸⁶ Inside the buildings, periods of joy and grief alternated for residents in similar yet asynchronous rhythms. Those contributed to spatialising the different parts of the cités, fragmenting them with fleeting, yet significant, symbolic boundaries. In early June 1907, M. Billiout had just lost his father and his mother was ailing –she would pass away a few days later.¹⁸⁷ Mourning extended over a couple of years for his family, since the year before he had

¹⁸¹ AD93, 4U7/909, Brigade de gendarmerie de Saint-Denis Plaine, Procès-verbal du 25.09.1890 à 19h30 c. Siefermann Euphrasie femme Hautefeuille.

¹⁸² APP, CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918.

¹⁸³ We know this from cases like that of Joséphine Carbone, aged 6, who was injured at No. 100 after having been asked by her mother to help prepare the family lunch (APP, CB 92.6, 1910/765, 30.08.1910). And at M. Delamotte's charcuterie at No. 98, little girls would come shopping on behalf of their parents, carrying their accounting book to keep track of the family's debts (AD93, 4U7/481, 12.05.1892, Delamotte c. Caillet).

¹⁸⁴ Pierre de Peretti, "La fête comme enjeu politique. Le rôle des associations culturelles dans la prise du pouvoir municipal à Saint-Denis," in Noëlle Gérôme, Danielle Tartakowsky, Claude Willard (eds.), *La Banlieue en fête...*, *op. cit.*, 207–13.

¹⁸⁵ As one man remembered, "*On avait tout à la Plaine. On avait des bouis-bouis avec des accordéons et on dansait là. On rigolait bien. Tandis qu'à Paris, les bals musettes, on s'y frottait pas. Y avait que des prostituées et des maquereaux. Et si on voulait 'chambouler' avec une 'frangine,' on se faisait 'agacer' par le gars.*" M. Bitsch (arrived in the Plaine in 1912 at age 16), quoted by Pierre de Peretti, Saint-Denis 1870/1920, *op. cit.*, 16. ("We had everything in the Plaine. We had joints with accordions and we would dance there. We had good laughs. Whereas in Paris, we would stay away from the balls. There were only prostitutes and pimps. And if we wanted to dance with one of them, we would be hassled by the fellow.")

¹⁸⁶ We borrow the expression "layers of time" from Reinhart Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2000.

¹⁸⁷ AD93, 1E66/367, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1907, No. 671, 28.05.1907; No. 806, 24.06.1907; "Cahier des charges," in SPF Auxerre 1, *doc. cit.*

lost his elder brother at age 31.¹⁸⁸ These periods of illnesses had translated into debts, which certainly added to M. Billiout's sorrow.¹⁸⁹ In those exact same days of 1907, a neighbour of his, M. Carbone, was also in a predicament: one of his sons had been severely burnt in an accident at the factory, and had to stay home for two weeks – which meant one less salary for the family to live on. That year would certainly be pivotal for the Carbones, as they would lose yet another son in November, crushed between trolleys at Mouton.¹⁹⁰ A third colleague and neighbour, meanwhile, was just coming back from military service in Italy. That man, M. Tedeschi, might have considered himself lucky. He had served only one month before being discharged on medical grounds, and had returned to France with the woman he had just married in his native village.¹⁹¹

Residents were as likely to share the same time and spaces as to experience them differently. Their sense of place evolved depending on their own perimeters and rhythms of activity. But these representations were also influenced by one other set of circumstances: who they were, and who lived alongside them. The answers to these questions also frequently changed, so much so that the regular rearrangements of their demographic make-up became one of the main characteristics of the cités.

1.2. A place of diversity: the residents over time

The point here is not yet to focus on the differences between residents which could shape, and result from, their interactions. It is rather to analyse, with both qualitative and quantitative data, the traits of the residents' population as a whole, while

¹⁸⁸ AD93, 1E66/366, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1906, No. 269, 8.03.1906.

¹⁸⁹ See AD93, 4U7/654, 1907 (1), 18.01.1907, Panet et Gouvenaux c. Billiout.

¹⁹⁰ JSD, 9.06.1907; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1318, 26.11.1907.

¹⁹¹ FNA, BB/11/13343, 26126 x 30, Benedetto Tedeschi.

acknowledging the contingencies of the information at our disposal. Each resident experienced multiple evolutions; information collected about them as well.¹⁹²

Statistical overview

Quantitative information, no matter at which level it is gathered, is very much dependent on its sources. We have elected to aggregate all the data we were able to collect on residents in a single database, in order to benefit from source crossing and remedy the gaps, inconsistencies and errors affecting each source type. This has meant sifting through as many sorts of documents as possible; reviewing exhaustively, in particular, Saint-Denis civil and military registries, registers of the police station and local courts, and correspondence received by the Mayor of Saint-Denis. Over the course of this process, we have been able to identify 4,845 people living in the cités over our period. This figure is a low estimate of the actual number. Many residents did not stay long enough in the tenement for their presence to be captured in written records. That number, however, is already significantly higher than what the censuses alone would have yielded. Only 57% of all the residents we have found were listed in at least one census register.

This is not to say that censuses should not be exploited, quite the contrary. From 1886 through 1931, they provide a wealth of information like no other: name, first name, age (or year of birth), nationality, situation to the head of the household, profession and at times employer.¹⁹³ And from 1911, they included the residents' place of birth. One of the limitations of those lists, however, is their failure to distinguish floors and building units. When matched against other sources, the way families are

¹⁹² Even the same question about the same person (about their place of birth, for instance) could be answered differently over the years, whether because residents modified their declarations or because those were not understood in the same way.

¹⁹³ The census for 1881 is not reliable, because the number associated to the houses does not correspond to the street numbers. Our best guess, given the residents' identity, is that No. 96 (which was numbered 84-86 until 1882) is the house 18 in the census (see SDMA, 1F15, vol. 1, p. 10). But for want of more certainty, we have decided to leave that census aside from our computations.

sorted in census registers does not even appear to correspond to the actual sequence of dwellings in the cités. This could be explained by a random sorting, in the registers, of the household folders compiled for each address. This could also be related to the fact that at Nos. 96 and 100, census operators chose not to individualise the multiple constructions in the courtyards. Yet another shortcoming of the census is that names, places and even genders listed in the registers are institutional translations that sometimes diverge greatly from what other, more precise, sources suggest.

The first lesson of the data drawn from censuses is the quantitative evolution of the population of the tenement. As shown on the following graph, the number of people peaked twice at Nos. 96-102 Av. de Paris: in the early 1890s, and again before the Great War. The highest total was reached in 1911 with 549, the lowest in 1931 with 388. The impact of the works realised by Louise Versigny’s heirs is particularly sensible in the increase of inhabitants at No. 96 and 98 in the 1900s. The series of destructions and evacuations following the Great War is also visible. While the constructions at No. 100 were the most populated initially, this changed in the 1920s in favour of No. 96.

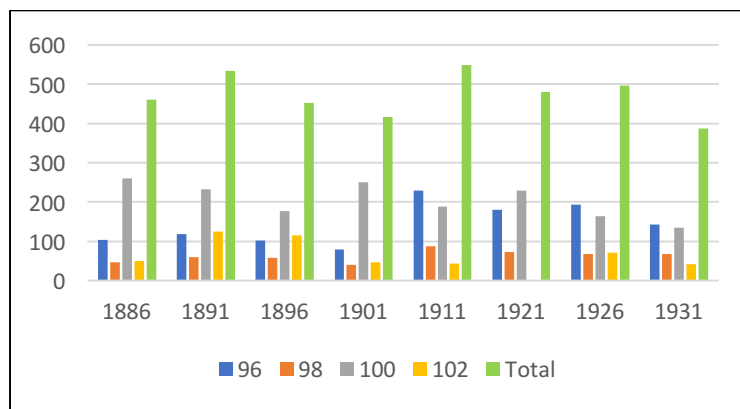


Figure 22: The population at Nos. 96–102 Av. de Paris, 1886-1931¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Note that for 1921, the number for No. 100 includes residents at No. 102, since both addresses were united in the census under the same designation “100-102.”

In the cités, people remained rather young throughout our period. Residents under 22 always accounted for at least 40% of the population, and even formed an absolute majority between 1891 and 1911. The average age, which stood around 25 in the early decades, rose after the Great War to 27. This was due in part to the general decline in natality caused by the conflict, and also to the sharp reduction of large groups of children living with their *padroni** or *padrones**.¹⁹⁵

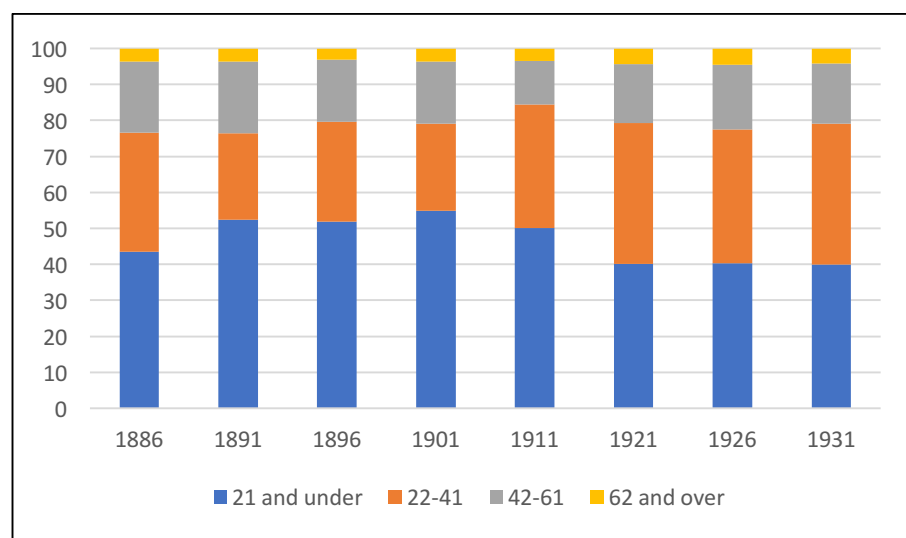


Figure 23: The percentage of residents at 96-102 Av. de Paris by age group

As far as the sex-ratio is concerned, male residents were always a majority. Although in the early decades, residents tended to live in entire, gender-balanced families, the arrival in the late 1890s of single men, sometimes accompanied by male children, perennially tilted the ratio towards the male component. The majority of single men renting rooms at the hotel at No. 102 also helped maintain that edge through the decades.

¹⁹⁵ On this issue, see below, chapter 2, point 3.

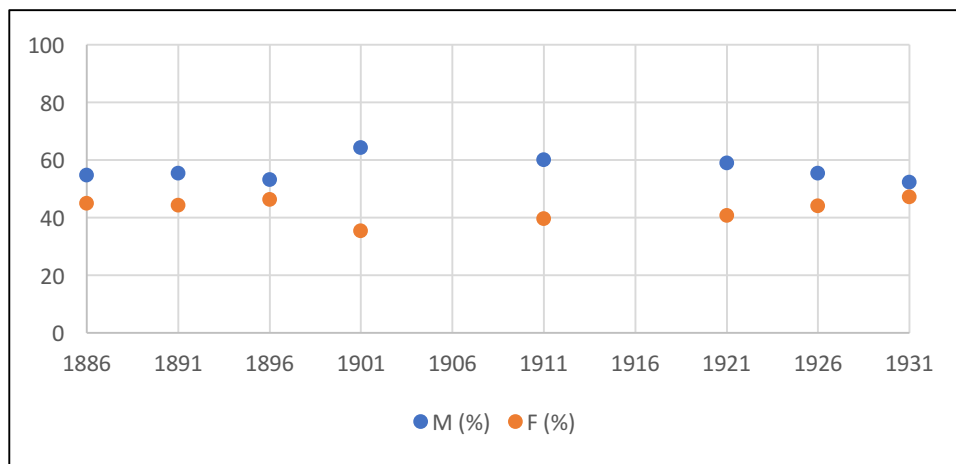


Figure 24: The percentage of residents at 96-102 Av. de Paris by gender

Lastly, between a fourth and a fifth of all heads of households in the cités were single at census dates. That proportion rose in 1901 to about 35%. Except for 1891, single male tenants were in greater numbers than their female counterparts, who were mostly widows, but for a few single, unmarried female workers.

Appearances

To know more about what the residents looked like, we need to turn to information outside of censuses. Reflecting general characteristics of their contemporaries, residents were rather short in size. Direct data about women are missing, but from the military files of 205 male inhabitants at 96-102 Av. de Paris, we can derive their average height: a little under 5 ft 5. Fewer than 8% were taller than 5 ft 8. The tallest of our entire sample, at 5 ft 11, was Ernest Poullain, the owner of the bar-hotel at No. 102. There is no hint in the sources that residents would have made connections between physical characteristics and people's origin, despite this being popular in intellectual circles at the time. Even people's complexion was not a readily available criterion to distinguish people from each other, at least until the Great War. Sources

record, for instance, a number of residents who were noted as “*basanés*” (swarthy) or “*colorés*” (coloured) and came from Paris, Lorraine, or Nord.¹⁹⁶

Moustaches were everywhere on male residents’ faces before the 1920s, whether small,¹⁹⁷ large,¹⁹⁸ or “à l’Américaine,” and newcomers quickly adjusted to the prevailing norm in that respect.¹⁹⁹ Most male residents, once they took off their dark-blue or grey factory outfit, wore collar-less shirts and woollen jackets. In the pockets of those jackets, they kept wallets, administrative papers, tobacco, and watches.²⁰⁰ Those who belonged to gangs of *apaches** often wore tattoos on their arms,²⁰¹ and the recognisable jockey-cap with a varnished peak.²⁰²

The outfit of young boys partly echoed that of adults. In 1908, a young 7-year-old boy from an Italian family at No. 100 wore a pair of trousers made of white wool, a blue cotton Russian blouse, a navy-blue cap with golden braids, black socks, black leather shoes with laces and nail-covered soles.²⁰³ People did not have much else to wear in winter, so they simply added layers of clothes on top of each other. In January 1913, for instance, a 15-year-old boy from No. 100 wore woollen trousers dotted in

¹⁹⁶ AVP, D4R1 1725, 1913, No. 4265, Marcel Bernard Jacob; D4R1 1613, 1911, No. 5256, Antoine Sommer; D4R1 1612, 1911, No. 4957, Ernest Léon Dubrulle.

¹⁹⁷ APP, CB 92.12 [unbound, in CB 92.27], 1915/732, 6.10.1915.

¹⁹⁸ APP, CB 92.13, 1917/116, 3.02.1917.

¹⁹⁹ APP, CB 92.18, 1922/86, 30.01.1922.

²⁰⁰ APP, CB 92.8, 1912/649, 30.06.1912; CB 92.12, 1916/384, 1-6.05.1916; CB 92.13, 1917/118, 3.02.1917. Michelle Perrot has described the appearance of workers at Legras: “*sous une veste, cotte et bourgeron de toile sur une chemise blanche sans col; peu de cravates, mais des foulards, peu, très peu de sabots... mais des godillots énormes*” (Michelle Perrot, *Les Ouvriers en grève*, France, 1871-1890, Paris, The Hague: Mouton, 1974, Vol. 1, 228).

²⁰¹ AVP, D4R1 1296, 1905, No. 2031; D4R1 1558, 1910, No. 3540; D4R1 1669, 1912, No. 5056; D4R1 1725, 1913, No. 4185; D4R1 1905, 5727, No. 1916. On the *apaches**, see among many references Dominique Kalifa, *L’Encre et le Sang. Récits de crimes et société à la Belle Époque*, Paris, Fayard, 1995; Michelle Perrot, “Dans le Paris de la Belle Époque, les ‘Apaches,’ premières bandes de jeunes,” *La lettre de l’enfance et de l’adolescence*, 2007, No. 1, 71–8.

²⁰² APP, CB 92.2, 1906/17, 5.01.1906; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/409, 26.03.1907; CB 92.4, 1908/615, 8.06.1908.

²⁰³ APP, CB 92.4, 1908/611, 15.06.1908.

black and grey over another pair dotted in black and white, a grey jacket over a black jacket, a grey cap, and a pair of boots.²⁰⁴

Fashion changes in the aftermath of the Great War percolated into the cités. A 19-year old Spanish youngster at No. 96 had a checked grey woollen suit, a grey wool sweater, three shirts described as “American,” and two vests.²⁰⁵ Two teenage girls at No. 100 had their hair cut short, to the despair of their father.²⁰⁶ A 21-year-old Italian woman at No. 96, for her part, possessed a green coat, a navy-blue suit, a dark-red dress, a green blouse made of Chinese fabric, a pair of yellow shoes, and a black leather handbag.²⁰⁷ Other female residents, especially of older generations, wore much less fashionable clothes, mostly ample, dark-coloured dresses they would sew themselves, as well as aprons and headscarves.²⁰⁸ On the following picture, a female laundry-worker is visible in a white work outfit; as far as her descendants remember, once at home she always wore black.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁴ APP, CB 92.9, 1913/66, 19.01.1913.

²⁰⁵ APP, CB 92.20, 1924/544, 27.04.1924.

²⁰⁶ APP, CB 92.23, 1926/1302, 5.09.1926.

²⁰⁷ APP, CB 92.15, 1918/607, 4-6.06.1918.

²⁰⁸ For a description of the sorts of fabric female residents used to sew their family's clothes, see APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1087, 1102, 1121, 2002, 27.09.1907.

²⁰⁹ Int. Sommer (No. 17), 6.04.2016; int. Besson (No. 27), 24.07.2016. Barbe is also represented on the bottom-right corner of the cover illustration.



*Figure 25: Barbe Sommer née Engelmann, resident at No. 96
among her colleagues, no date [1880s]*

Health

Clothing was certainly not a trifle for residents.²¹⁰ But health was far more important. The average age at death for residents over the period stands at 24 years, a figure held down by a high infant mortality –more than a fifth of all deaths concerned children who had yet to reach their first birthday. Scattered archival records provide information on some of the contagious diseases that spread within the cités: diphtheria, croup, dysentery, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, meningitis, chronic bronchitis, typhoid fever, measles.²¹¹ Military registers extend the list of conditions and disabilities further.

²¹⁰ Jean-Paul Brunet insisted that clothing was of “considerable importance” for workers in Saint-Denis, who devoted to it about a fifth of their total income. (“Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 439).

²¹¹ SDMA, 1 I 227, Préfecture de police, bureau d’hygiène, “État des entrées dans les hôpitaux des malades atteintes d’affections transmissibles,” 5.10.1915; CT433, “Désinfections demandées au Poste central de désinfection de la Préfecture de police” [1915-1919], 8.02.1916, 19.02.1916, 13.04.1918, 20.05.1918, 1.09.1918, 2.06.1919; CT551, “Nomenclature des maladies transmissibles et dont la déclaration est obligatoire,” 2.08.1912; AVP, D4R1 1453, 1908, No. 3328; CT566, “Années 1910-1913: Inspections médicales des enfants fréquentant les écoles communales : avis des cas de maladies transmissibles.”

The most common of all was a general weakness, which speaks to the poor nutrition and hard-working conditions of young residents.²¹²

An epidemic of cholera-type diarrhoea, in the summer 1892, did not affect everyone equally. The five who died were all living in the humblest lodgings at the back of No. 100.²¹³ The proximity of water wells from nearby cesspools exposed residents to high risks, and their replacement with fountains probably dates to that year.²¹⁴ Hygiene improved for everyone over time.²¹⁵ As a manifest sign of improvement, the cités were largely spared by the Spanish flu in 1918-1919, with just one probable related death and no notable peak in mortality.²¹⁶

Illnesses were not, however, the most frequent adverse experience residents faced as far as their health was concerned. Injuries sustained at work were much more common. They occasionally caused deaths, but more often imprinted permanent marks

²¹² Aside from weakness or insufficient muscular development (see e.g. AVP, D4R1 1613, 1911, No. 5032) residents of the cités suffered from scrofula, tachycardia, deaf-muteness, partial sight, perforated eardrums, chronic otitis, bad teeth, hernia, coxalgia, rickets, varices, kyphosis, genu valgum, idiocy: AVP, D4R1 566, 1889, No. 3329; D4R1 609, 1890, No. 3634; D4R1 645, 1891, No. 689; D4R1 689, 1892, No. 4443; D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1611; D4R1 834, 1895, No. 4813; D4R1 879, 1896, No. 4117; D4R1 880, 1896, No. 4684; D4R1 920, 1897, No. 1985; D4R1 880, 1896, No. 4655; D4R1 1562, 1910, No. 5316; SDMA, H27, 1892, Macaigne; H27, 1893, Bourgeois; H29, 1901, Caput; H29, 1904, Poullain.

²¹³ SDMA, CT560, Commissariat de police Saint-Denis sud, "État nominatif des personnes atteintes du choléra-nostras ou de diarrhée cholériforme," 1892; AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.* One of the inhabitants of the cités, the young Joseph Schaeffer, 8, felt sick in front of his classmates one afternoon at school; he passed a few hours later (SDMA, CT58, Letter from J. Courcelle, director of the boys' school av. de Paris 120 to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 26.07.1892).

²¹⁴ Adrien Le Roy des Barres, Paul Louis Gastou, *Le Choléra à Saint-Denis en 1892, rôle des différents agents infectieux et des conditions hygiéniques dans l'invasion, la marche et la propagation du choléra*, Paris: Asselin et Houzeau, 1893.

²¹⁵ Analyses of military exemptions at a macro-level have shown that the overall health in the northern suburbs, just like in Paris proper, steadily improved at the end of the 19th century. See Lenard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris*, *op. cit.*, 54.

²¹⁶ See for the one death, AD93, 1E66/380, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1918, No. 1153; SDMA, CT433, *doc. cit.*, 10.10.1918. On the prevalence of the flu in the area, see SDMA, CT566, "Renseignements fournis par les Directeurs et directrices sur l'épidémie de grippe," no date [1919] (elementary school, Av. de Paris 120: enrolled 350, absents with the flu 95; pre-school: enrolled 173, absent with the flu 80).

on the residents' bodies –missing limbs, burns, scars of all sorts.²¹⁷ In Saint-Denis as a whole, fifteen work accidents were declared every day between 1901 and 1915; from 1916 to 1931, after the war effort dramatically expanded the heavy industry, the figure jumped to 43.²¹⁸ In just three months in 1926, there were 137 accidents at the Plaine glass factory, and 66 at Mouton.²¹⁹ In the intense heat and fumes of those fusion industries, strokes and respiratory diseases like emphysema were persistent dangers, as shown by the fate of at least four glassmakers who resided in the cités.²²⁰ Male workers were the most exposed to those work-related perils, but women were not immune either. In 1902, Cristina Pirolli, a 18-year-old resident from No. 100 employed as a polisher at Legras, fell into a crate where she was disposing glass balls, injuring her left forearm.²²¹

Depression and distress were also common, which led some to contemplate suicide. We counted seven people living at No. 96-102 who attempted to take their lives over a half-century, two of whom survived.²²² Economic predicament was rarely the main cause, as opposed to illness or frustrated love, but difficult material conditions

²¹⁷ For residents who died from injuries sustained at the workplace, see: *La Justice*, 19.02.1886 (Schiertz), APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1318, 26.11.1907 (Carbone), both crushed between wagons; APP, CB 92.7, 1911/133, 11.02.1911 (Verrecchia), incinerated after falling into a furnace. For those who had parts of their arms or legs amputated after work accidents: FNA, F/22/452, Rapport Drancourt, 25.07.1901 (Achille Pirolli); *La Petite République socialiste*, 10.03.1900 (Dominique Pirolli); APP, CB 92.13, 1917/74, 30.12.1916 (Peña); for burns to the leg, *La Petite République socialiste*, 22.01.1898 (Vérot); to the feet, *Journal de Saint-Denis*, 8.09.1898 (Martail); to the face: AVP, D4R1, 1018, 1899, No. 4683 (Cuny); to the entire body, *Journal de Saint-Denis*, 9.06.1907 (Carbone); for amputated fingers, *Journal de Saint-Denis*, 20.06.1897 (Galliand); crushed fingers, AVP, D4R1 1150, 1902, No. 2285 (Kirschwing) and D4R1 492, 1887, No. 3502 (Hepply); cuts to the hand (SDMA, CT768, 29.04.1902, Lagadec).

²¹⁸ SDMA, 5 Q 29, Accidents du travail, 18.09.1926-4.02.1928.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ AVP, Military registers, D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1505, Philippe Wernert; D4R1 1058, 1900, No. 1710, Xavier Eugène Muller; D4R1 1150, 1902, 2256, Virgile Léon Poullain; SDMA, E377, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1912, No. 648, 14.06.1912, Pierre Carabin (resident in the cités from 1879 to 1905); *La Bataille syndicaliste*, 14.06.1912.

²²¹ SDMA, CT768, "Accidents de travail, avril 1902," declaration form, 2.04.1902.

²²² *Le Petit Parisien*, 29.07.1904; APP, CB 92.4, 1908/199, 20.02.1908; APP, CB 92.6, 1910/266, 26.03.1910; *Le Journal*, 2.01.1912; CB 92.23, 1926/1302, 5.09.1926. For unsuccessful attempts, APP, CB 92.10, 1914/12, 30.12.1913, APP, CB 92.28, 1932/866, 27.04.1932 (that last person would succeed a few weeks later: APP, CB 92.28, 1932/1938, 14.09.1932). This does not include former residents (see APP, CB 92.4, 1908/743, 8.08.1908).

certainly did not help. Nor did alcohol, which remained a permanent scourge in the cités and the Plaine in general. Not only did its widespread consumption entail illnesses, job losses, physical violence, and numerous arrests, but its destructive effects also included preventing families from staying united or receiving public benefits.²²³

Along with the worst conditions of hygiene in the cités, the mortality rate declined during the period. With time, residents started going more often to hospitals, either in Saint-Denis or in Paris. In particular, after the Great War, deliveries of babies born to residents were four times more likely to happen at the hospital compared to the period before the conflict, even though they still concerned a small minority of births (5.5%). The rest was performed at home by midwives, compensated by the municipality when families could not afford their service.

Birth rates remained high throughout the decades. The decrease in 1901, visible on the following diagram, is certainly related to the lower proportion of women that year. The natural increase, of around 1% at the beginning of the period and again in 1901, 1911, 1921 and 1926, partly explains the constant overcrowding of the cités.

²²³ Intemperance would indeed flag parents as insufficiently “moral,” as the term went at the time: APP, CB 92.21, 1925/164, 28.01.1925-4.02.1925; 1925/170, 289 bis, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925. See Sophie Apocale, “Assistance et Bienfaisance à Aubervilliers (1893-1945),” master’s thesis in history, University of Paris I, 1996, 164; Michael Marrus, “L’alcoolisme social à la Belle Époque,” in Lion Murard, Patrick Zylberman (eds.), *Recherches*, No. 29 (1977), “L’haleine des faubourgs. Ville, habitat et santé au XIX^e siècle,” 285–314.

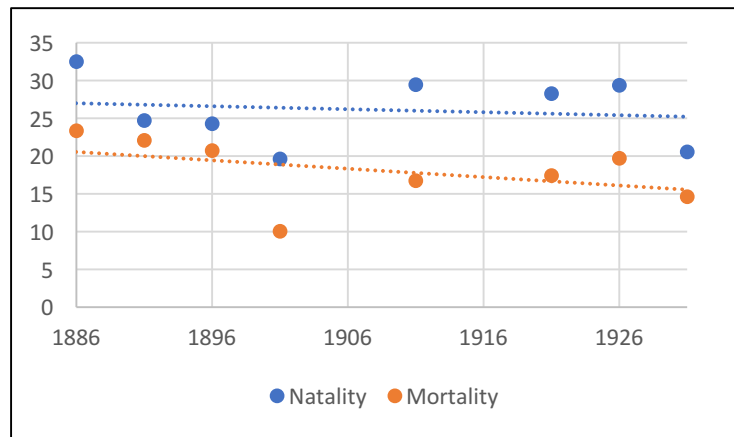


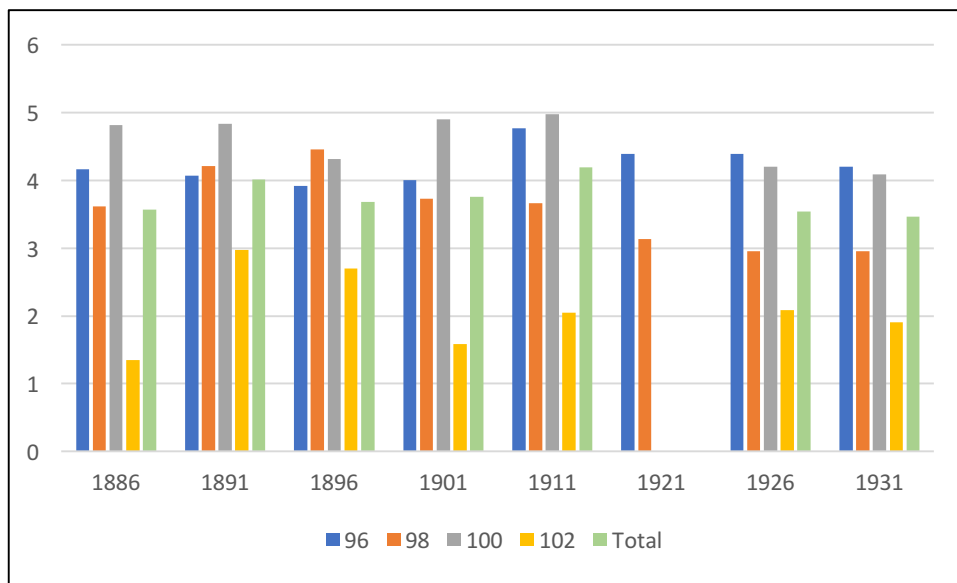
Figure 26: Natality and mortality rates at 96-102 Av. de Paris (%)²²⁴

In 1896, at No. 98, the Dimnets lived with their five children; at No. 96, neighbours of theirs were in eight; and at No. 100, another family had ten members. All were living in one-bedroom apartments.²²⁵ The influx of lodgers from the late 1890s and early 1900s only increased that density. Out of four ten-person households at No. 100 in 1901, two had one lodger; in 1911, there were at least two of them in each of the four households of the cités with eleven members.²²⁶ Overall, the number of residents per household oscillated between 3.5 and 4.2 over the period, and even approached 5 at No. 100 in 1901 and 1911.

²²⁴ Based on five-year moving averages of the number of deaths and births recorded in the Saint-Denis civil registers at each census year. A number of deaths at war between 1914 and 1919 are not included, as they were not transcribed in the registers.

²²⁵ AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.* As indicated earlier, one-bedroom apartments at the time had a floor area of 12 to 15 square meters.

²²⁶ SDMA, 1F21, 1F24, 1F27, 1896, 1901, 1911 Censuses. On lodgers, see chapter 3.



*Figure 27: The average number of people per lodging unit
at Nos. 96–102 Av. de Paris, 1886-1931*

Origins

With regard to the residents' geographic origins, censuses only started listing birthplaces in 1911. However, civil, electoral and military registers, as well as naturalisation files and genealogical databases, allowed us to fill the gaps for a large part of residents in earlier years –to the proportion of two thirds in 1886, three quarters in 1901, and more than 80% in 1891 and 1896.²²⁷ Adding the information collected from non-census sources, we find that inhabitants of the cités at our period hailed from at least 1016 different towns, across 172 districts and 21 countries.

As shown in the following diagram, the percentage of residents born in Saint-Denis rose to a quarter in the 1880s and 1890s, fell back until 1911 where it accounted for a

²²⁷ See www.paris-tenement.eu, "Censuses" (using Google Chrome). The exact sourcing of the data is indicated in the "General table 96-102," tab "Life events." Mistakes and misspellings in censuses from 1911 onwards did not allow a complete recovery of origins either. They could be reconstructed with accuracy in 93,4% (1911), 89,8% (1921), 93,5% (1926) and 95,3 % (1931) of the cases.

mere 13%, and increased again until the end of the period. At the first four census dates, these *Dionysian** natives were essentially children of migrants (i.e. people not born in Saint-Denis); none of them was older than 29. This comes as no surprise: the Plaine was mostly empty until the 1870s. For later decades, the consistently higher percentage of people born out of town attests to the constant influx of newcomers, and the high turnover rate of residents. Between their first and last appearances in the sources, the median duration over our period was a little under four years. On the other hand, the cités had a stable core of families: over 25% of people mentioned at least twice in the sources remained in the cités for at least 10 years.²²⁸

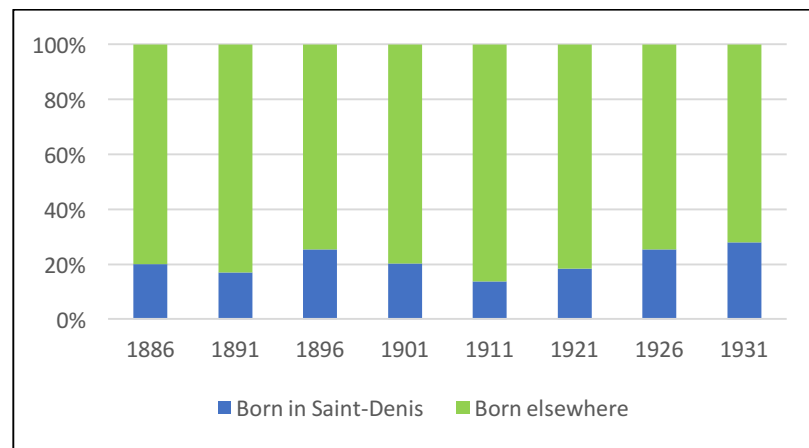


Figure 28: Locals and immigrants in the cités, 1886-1931

Apart from Saint-Denis, the main place of birth of residents across our period was Paris and its banlieue. People born in the Seine district represented about 10% of the non-Dionysian-born residents. This is consistent with broader calculations, which have shown that the banlieue was not only “a spillway” for French provinces and

²²⁸ In these statistics, we have only included individuals mentioned in at least twice in the sources. Note that the important infant mortality drives down the median, and also that this imperfect metric is dependent both on the existence of sources and on our ability to come across them.

foreign countries, but also a destination for inhabitants of the capital.²²⁹ It is estimated that 350,000 people were pushed out of Paris and into the banlieue by Haussmann's renovation works alone.²³⁰

The proportion of other origins varied greatly over time. The share of people born in Alsace and Lorraine started high and steadily declined, from more than 6 out of 10 non-Dionysian natives, to negligible proportions in the interwar era.²³¹ The number of residents born in Brittany or in Nord and Pas-de-Calais never reached the 10% mark, but the later origin peaked soon after the Great War, due to the presence of refugees from those districts.²³² As for people from the Italian provinces of Molise (administrative centre: Campobasso) and Terra di Lavoro* (Caserta), their presence starts being visible –and massive– in 1901, with more than 40% of the retrieved, non-Saint-Denis origins at that date. Their share then slowly decreased as well, to a little more than one in ten in 1931. Residents born in the provinces of Burgos and Santander, in Spain, appeared for their part in the censuses in 1911, and remained at the level of one fifth of the immigrant population of the cités thereafter. Their peers from the Extremaduran province of Cáceres started at a share of 5% at that same date, which later rose to 12% after the war.

²²⁹ Alain Faure, "Les déplacements de travail entre Paris et sa banlieue (1880-1914): première approche" in *Villes en parallèles*, No. 10 (June 1986), "Les crises de la banlieue aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Emploi et résidence," 233–48.

²³⁰ John Merriman, *Aux marges de la ville. Faubourgs et banlieues en France, 1815-1870*, Paris: Seuil, 1994, 104.

²³¹ Alsace and Lorraine are meant here as the départements of Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Moselle, Meurthe, and Vosges, and after the annexation, Ober-Elsass, Unter-Elsass, Lothringen, Meurthe-et-Moselle, Moselle, Belfort, and Vosges.

²³² The presence of that contingent from the Northern districts, completed by a strong component of people from Picardie (Aisne, Oise, Somme) is probably partly related to these migrants' tendency, identified by Jean-Claude Farcy, to settle close to their point of arrival in the Paris area. See Jean-Claude Farcy, "L'immigration provinciale en banlieue au début du XX^e siècle," in Jean-Paul Brunet (ed.), *Immigration, vie politique et populisme...*, op. cit., 58.

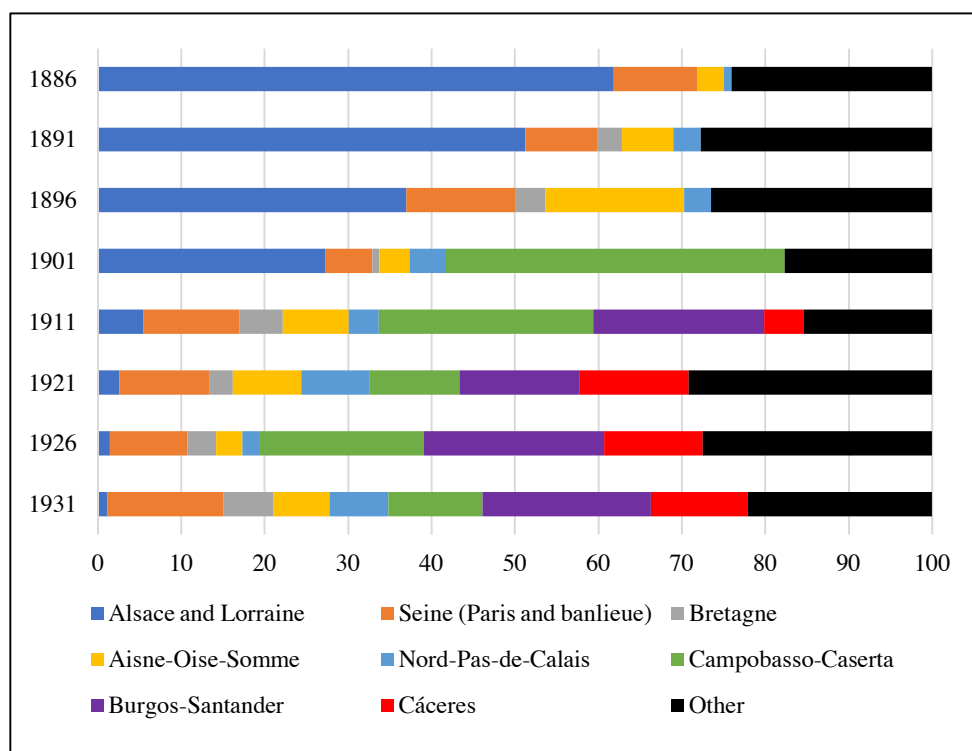


Figure 29: The immigrant population in the cités by clusters of origins for each census year, 1886-1931²³³

These statistics provide a very partial snapshot of the residents' origins. The quarter of residents from unspecified locations in the diagram (the "other" category) came from a wide variety of places, including regions of France, Germany, Italy and Spain different from those explicitly identified above. For instance, the first Italians in the cités did not come from the south of the Peninsula, but from the Duchy of Parma.²³⁴ In addition, there were many unexpected birthplaces such as New York, Philadelphia, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Stockholm, or Saigon. Those often corresponded to the families' previous migrations, as did many births in the Paris area, where many had only made temporary stops.²³⁵

²³³ People born in Saint-Denis are not included in this graph.

²³⁴ SDMA, CT928, Déclarations d'étrangers, No. 1178, 2.12.1888.

²³⁵ See chapter 2.

In order to provide a visual, and more comprehensive, rendition of these evolutions, we have retrieved the geographic coordinates of each birthplace, and devised an interactive map of the world displaying the number of residents from every single location at each census year. This multi-scalar cartography can be found on-line.²³⁶ This tool prevents clusters of geographic origins from being artificially fragmented by administrative divisions between districts and countries.

All in all, based on the residents' origins, the half-century under scrutiny can be divided into five periods, corresponding to as many immigration waves. From 1882 to 1898, people from the confines of France and the German countries made up the overwhelming majority. The arrival at No. 100 in 1898 of the first Casertans and Molisans –who had first settled in the Plaine two years earlier– upended the balance in favour of their contingent for a good ten years. In 1908, Northern Spaniards from the Mountain of Burgos and southern Cantabria started arriving as well. Along with individuals from Extremadura, their growing presence characterised the third period, between 1908 and 1914. The Great War itself, with all the reshuffling it involved, stands out as another distinct moment. Finally, the postwar era saw the slow decline of previous immigration stocks, and the appearance of yet new ones, albeit of modest proportions, from Eastern Europe in particular.

In terms of concentration by address, some features are worth noting, in order to understand how the tenement block was structured demographically. At No. 98, no one from Spain or Italy was ever to be found, except for one person from Piedmont in 1924 and another from Veneto in 1931. Similarly, Czechs, Serbs, Romanians and Poles only appeared at No. 102 in the interwar period, as they were exclusively staying at the hotel. Casertans and Molisans, for their part, only lived at No. 100 in 1901,

²³⁶ See www.paris-tenement.eu (using Google Chrome). Note that the red dots that are not marked with a number of individuals denote just one person.

before being spread quite evenly between No. 96 and No. 100 in subsequent census years. This explains why No. 100 became known, around the 1900, as a *cité* of Italians.²³⁷

When it comes to the spatial distribution by origin, we should bear in mind the influence of the material environment itself. At the turn of the century, newcomers arriving in numbers had much less opportunity to settle at No. 96, as the capacity of that address had yet to be expanded. A few years hence, the opposite would be true: new rental space would mostly be concentrated at No. 96. That address would then be viewed by some as a “Spanish *cité*.”²³⁸ It is true that Extremadurans almost never lived at No. 100 (only 9 out of 46 in 1911 and none after that), but Northern Spaniards, throughout the period, were more evenly divided between No. 96 and No. 100-102. But whatever the numbers’ reality, this type of ethnic shortcuts was quite common in the area, and certainly produced, for a while, what some sociologists call “social-urban boundaries.”²³⁹ The most important is that those boundaries were constantly shifting, and were essentially the monopoly of outsiders. They mostly held true for fellow Plainards for whom, in spite of their own humble standards of living, the real or fantasised misery of the disreputable tenements at Nos. 96-102 served as a counter-model.²⁴⁰

Regarding the precise distribution of residents between the different houses and floors of the *cités*, some information can be derived from scattered fiscal documents

²³⁷ *Le Rappel*, 22.08.1900 (“*cité Nicolas, refuge des Italiens*”); *Le Matin*, 29.09.1900 (“*une cité qui est une véritable colonie, peuplée de ses compatriotes [italiens]*”); APP, CB 92.7, 1911/221, 3.08.1911.

²³⁸ Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018. Note that in 1911, No. 96 was still included among the “*cités italiennes*” by the police in 1911 (APP, CB 92.7, 1911/221, 3.08.1911).

²³⁹ Further south on the Avenue, at No. 30, the *cité* Châtelain had been known for a few years the “*cité des Bretons*” and then “*cité de l’Est*.” On the expression “social-urban boundaries,” see Brigitte Moulin (ed.), *La Ville et ses frontières. De la ségrégation sociale à l’ethnisation des rapports sociaux*, Paris: Karthala, 2001, 13–4.

²⁴⁰ A similar process has been described by Alain Faure for the *cité* Jeanne-d’Arc, in the 13th arrondissement of Paris. See Alain Faure, “Aspects de la vie du quartier dans le Paris populaire de la fin du XIX^e siècle,” *Recherches contemporaines*, 6 (2000-2001), 292.

and notary records.²⁴¹ Once read in combination with other sources, they point to several sectors of micro-concentration by origin. In the early 1880s, only the first two floors of the first building at No. 96, the one on the Avenue, had a significant homogeneity of origins; those floors were inhabited almost exclusively by households from Lorraine, who had family ties to each other.²⁴² The rest of the buildings at that address was quite mixed. At No. 100 in 1907, the above-mentioned “balcony” and also the first floor of a house at the far end of the courtyard, were almost exclusively inhabited by families from the Cassino-Sora area.²⁴³ In 1926, while residents at No. 98 were of diverse origins geographically speaking, all were of French descent, save for a tenant from Belgium on the first floor. As for the buildings making up No. 96 in 1929, residents were more heterogeneously distributed than a few years earlier. Families from Burgos and Cáceres were present at every floor of every unit, but both of the main buildings were well balanced in terms of origins. Only smaller constructions at the back were more homogenous, with 12 out of 13 households from Spain –albeit without any apparent distribution along provincial lines.²⁴⁴

These pieces of information suggest that ethnic homogeneity should probably be looked for, if relevant, at the scale of floors and corridors. Its effect seems to be felt at an even lower level than the street or the building, which are the only geometries to have roused, in that respect, the curiosity of scholars.²⁴⁵ But no conclusion can be

²⁴¹ Those are preparatory files for the establishment of the land register in the 1880s and 1890s; notarial deeds recording changes of ownership in 1883 (which only concerns No. 96), 1907 (No. 100 and 102) and 1926 (No. 98); and a report from the municipal health service identifying No. 96 residents floor by floor in 1929. See AD93, D4P4 57, Documents préparatoires à l'établissement du cadastre, bulletins de recensement de propriété, Nos. 42, 42 bis, 43, 98-100, 96, 102 Av. de Paris [1880s-1890s]; FNA, MC/ET/XXXVIII/1224, Minutes de Me Gamard, “Cahier des charges pour parvenir à la vente d'un droit au bail de terrains sis à Saint-Denis, et des constructions édifiées sur ces terrains,” 12.10.1883; SPF Auxerre 1, *doc. cit.*, 7.01.1908; FNA, MC/ET/LVII/1637, Minutes de Me Barillot, 16.07.1926-31.07.1926, Vente par Mme Barillier à Mlle Andrez, 31.07.1926; SDMA, 2 AC W 9, Bureau d'hygiène, “Av. Wilson 96,” 1929-1932, List of tenants, 20.03.1929.

²⁴² FNA, MC/ET/XXXVIII/1224, *doc. cit.*

²⁴³ “Cassino-Sora” is an imperfect way to refer to the mountainous area across Molise and Terra di Lavoro where a lot of residents came from. See the digital map for more clarity.

²⁴⁴ Buildings C and D had been brought down by that date.

²⁴⁵ Annie Fourcaut, Mathieu Flonneau (eds.), *Une Histoire croisée de Paris et de ses banlieues à l'époque contemporaine. Bibliographie, bilan d'étape*, Paris: Ville de Paris, 2005, 13. Brunet could

reached without looking in more detail at people's networks and dynamics of solidarity, which will be the focus of the next two chapters.

Occupations and income

From the analysis of the residents' occupations emerges another periodisation. An initial period of employment diversity in the 1880s, when residents were employed in various crafts and trades, was followed by a quarter of a century, until the war, dominated by the Legras glassworks. At that period, while that company did not employ every single resident, it came very close. The factory did not shut down altogether during the Great War, but the conflict had a negative impact on its production, and better wages were to be earned in armament factories. Heavier industry started to attract much of the workforce that had not been displaced by the conflict or had arrived since its outbreak. After the war, widespread progress in mechanisation led traditional factories of the Plaine to employ fewer workers than before. Along with the improvement of private and public transport, this trend is the reason why in the post-war period a new occupational diversity took hold in the cités, with people commuting over greater distances. Lastly, a peak in unemployment at the very end of the period marked the beginning of the Great Depression.²⁴⁶

Occupations can be grouped in broad professional categories. The vast majority of residents were *journaliers**. About three quarters of male residents whose profession was listed in censuses were employed as factory workers. The proportion for their

write "*D'une façon générale, les étrangers ne se regroupent pas par nationalité, même s'il est fréquent de trouver dans le même immeuble deux familles, a fortiori deux ou plusieurs célibataires, originaires du même pays.*" (Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 143).

²⁴⁶ The crisis started being felt around the cités in late 1930. On 31.10.1930, the glass factory put one furnace out of service and laid off 49 workers (see AVP, D1U10 729, Conseil de prud'hommes de la Seine, section pour les produits chimiques, 18.11.1930, 29.12.1930, Nos. 49231, 49348, François Moreau c. Sté Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies). In mid-1931, six residents were already unemployed (SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census). Others were laid off in 1932 because of "work shortages" (see FNA, 19770881/45, 25656 x 33, Jean Antoine Verrecchia; 19780030/235, 2149 x 48; Leandro García; 19780013/156, 21168 x 46, Jean Carnevale).

female counterparts is harder to measure, as the profession field was left blank for many housewives. A sense of female employment in factories can be inferred, however, from the ratio between female and male residents employed in factories. In 1886, there were 4 female workers for every 10 male workers in the cités. That number fell constantly until 1911, when it was only 2.7 women for 10 men. After a sharp rise in the Great War, which is not visible in census figures, it slipped back to 1.8 in 1921. The rate then recovered slowly until it reached its original level in 1931, around 40%.

Another noticeable trend is the swelling ranks of *employés** from 1911 onwards, which was felt even more on the female side. In 1931, ten female residents were working in white-collar jobs, a fourth of the number working in factories. Those figures, however, are greatly misleading: female work remained mostly hidden in censuses. For instance, women like Marie Mor, from No. 96, and Clémentine Schwaller and Rosa Fraioli, from No. 100, were not listed as paid workers in censuses. And yet they were compensated by Legras's management for sweeping the floors of the factory's halls, and allowed to resell the specks of glass they collected.²⁴⁷ This was only one of the many ways for housewives to supplement the family's income. Some worked at home as occasional seamstresses; others, like Antonia González, a housewife at No. 96, would go to the wash house and do her neighbours' laundry for a fee. As for Mme Ponte, at No. 100, she would prepare oysters and snails, and sell them by the building's entrance.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ AD93, 4U7/1002, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal du 22.12.1902, exécution d'instructions du Parquet du 17.12.1902, affaire Legras Charles, interrogatoire de M. Legras; AD93, 4U7/628, 9.09.1904, Dame Mor c. Legras et Cie.

²⁴⁸ Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018.

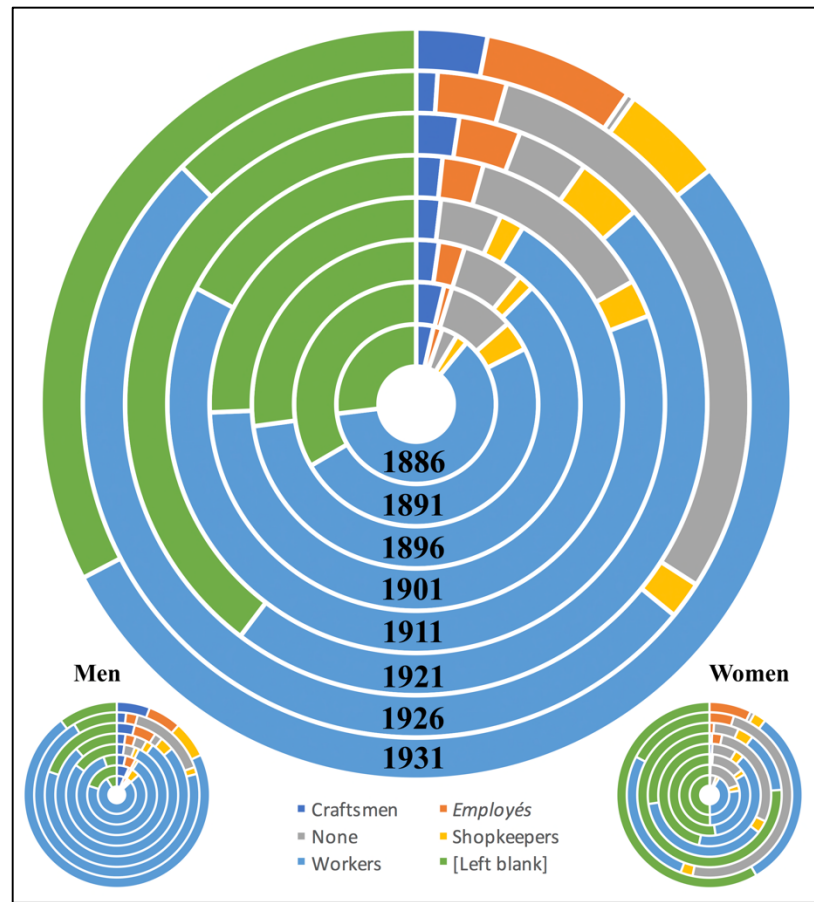


Figure 30: Residents aged 13 and over, by professional category, 1886-1931²⁴⁹

The balance between skilled and unskilled workers is hard to measure statistically, as professions could alternatively be described by their mode of payment (“*journalier*”) or by the nature of the work (“*verrier*,” for instance). Even managers could be paid on a daily basis; and being listed as “*verrier*” by census officials did not mean that one was a proper, qualified “*ouvrier verrier*” at Legras. What we can

²⁴⁹ This diagram is based on professions and occupations explicitly mentioned in censuses, which account for only 57.20 % on average over the eight census years. The rest is made of the elderly, and also a lot of women who were housewives. On the diagram, the proportions of the category “None” is thus vastly underrepresenting the number of stay-at-home mothers in the cités. One should not read too much into the uptick of women listed explicitly as housewives or without profession in 1926 (which accounts for the surge of the total of unemployed people on the diagram for that year), as it corresponds to a comparable diminution in the number of boxes left blank by census officials.

reconstruct by combining information is the unquestionable centrality of the glass factory in early decades. The factory grew steadily in the 1880s and 1890s, and the cités served as one of several dormitories for its workers.²⁵⁰ In 1901, at least 71% of the residents of both sexes aged 11 or over worked at Legras.²⁵¹ Based on photographs of the factory personnel in the 1900s, we can identify the activities performed by women. They represented 38.5% of the labour force in the carving, cutting, and wiping department, and specialised in the last two crafts. Their share was 53% in the decoration unit, and 29% in shipping.²⁵² Women's careers were shorter, however, as demonstrated by their extremely low proportion among the 30-year-old employees.²⁵³



Figure 31: The personnel of the decoration unit at Legras, in the 1900s (detail)

²⁵⁰ The first glass workers had settled in the cités in the late 1870s, with three such families at No. 96 (at that time numbered 84) et two at No. 100 (then No. 90) in 1879 (SDMA, 1G91, Matrices des contributions personnelle, mobilières et des patentes, 1879, 391).

²⁵¹ In 1901, 119 out of 329 residents aged 11 or older, were explicitly listed as working at the glassworks, and to that number must be added the other people listed as glassmakers or glass carvers but for whom the census official failed to mention an employer.

²⁵² SDMA, 1S21, Ernest Mesière, Album Legras, no date (ca. 1905-1910).

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, “Ouvriers travaillant depuis plus de trente ans dans l’usine.”

Mouton's clout in the cités expanded constantly as well. In 1911, the wire-drawing factory was already the residents' second employer, despite the significant distance between its site and the cités –around 600 meters, against only 100 to reach Legras. Although the first Burgales and Cantabrian residents had worked at the glassworks, Mouton soon became an employer of choice for Spaniards. In 1911, a third of the residents employed at Mouton were from Spain. That proportion rose to 40% in 1921, before receding to a quarter in 1926. At that last date, Mouton had become the first employer of all residents in general, and Spanish ones in particular. And yet in both cases, absolute percentages were limited. It was nothing like the monopoly enjoyed by Legras at the turn of the century.²⁵⁴ In fact, after the Great War, residents were quite evenly divided between many factories. The metals industry had replaced glass as the first industrial sector, employing about a quarter of the residents in 1926, and still 15% five years later.

Newcomers in the tenement block who took industrial jobs were, in general, new to those professional activities. Some glass workers or rail layers had earlier worked as servants,²⁵⁵ or had been born to parents who were servants themselves.²⁵⁶ A strolling merchant and mason turned glassmaker in the mid-1890s had initially worked as a cloth-weaver.²⁵⁷ Others included people who had worked as miners, millers, and sawyers.²⁵⁸ Some residents, however, had inherited their craft from their parents. That

²⁵⁴ Of residents whose employer was mentioned in the 1926 census, Mouton employed 14.3% in total, and just 8.7% of the Spanish residents. Natacha Lillo reports for her part that at the scale of the Plaine, almost 15% of Spanish workers of the Plaine were employed at Mouton's in 1926, mostly as unskilled workers (Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'...", *op. cit.*, 229).

²⁵⁵ AD51, 2E 497/9, Passavant, marriages, 1880, No. 6, 22.11.1880, Charles Nicolas Detante and Marie Joséphine Collinet (at No. 100 in 1901); AD56, Noyal-Pontivy, marriages, 1875, No. 9, 21.01.1875, Joseph Dugué and Marie Jeanne Josselin (at No. 100 in 1891).

²⁵⁶ AD14, 4E3289, Foulognes, marriages, 1868, No. 2, 12.08.1868, Jean Pierre Langlois dit Jean-Baptiste and Marie Victoire Mary. Marie Victoire and her sons, employed at the glass factory, lived at No. 102 in the 1890s.

²⁵⁷ AD02, 5Mi0701, Wassigny, marriages, 1863-1868, No. 52, 11.07.1864, Jules Maximilien Fontaine and Charlotte Cahen (at No. 100 in the 1890s).

²⁵⁸ AD58, 2MiEC459, Saint-Léger-des-Vignes, marriages, 1874, 24.10.1874, Jean Gardet and Marie Bonnot (at No. 96 in 1911); AD08, Bayel, 4E03511, marriages, 1873, No. 5, 6.10.1873, Jules Adrien Robert and Adèle Octavie Lécuyer (at No. 100 in the 1880s and 1890s); AD51, Vanault-les-Dames, mar., 1887, No. 5, 21.05.1887, Alphonse Burnécourt (at No. 100 in the 1890s).

was the case of some, though not all, qualified glass workers, but also of a laundry worker and a mason.²⁵⁹ Since a vast majority of residents came from rural areas, it is not surprising to discover that they had been born either into families of craftsmen – clog makers, cartwrights, blacksmiths, road menders–, or of farm labourers.²⁶⁰ Almost all residents from the South of Italy, the North of Spain and Extremadura had worked in agricultural jobs before their emigration, and had been born to land-working parents.²⁶¹

Work, in the Plaine, was never hard to find. In principle, unemployment was not a concern for healthy people. It only became a general problem at four moments: in the mid-1890s, in the second semester of 1914, in 1919-1921 and after 1930. Nevertheless, being employed did not, by any means, prevent misery. “*Les gens trouvaient du boulot, mais on les payait presque rien,*” a Plainard remembered when asked about the Belle Époque.²⁶² The following graph, based on data compiled from naturalisation files,

²⁵⁹ Anne Marie Paton née Gaudé, laundry worker at No. 102 in 1891 (AM Nantes, 1E1726, 1er canton, 1887, No. 180); Jean-Claude Garnier, mason, at No. 100 around 1890 (AD88, 81E9-37797, Gruey, mar., No. 29, 2.03.1863).

²⁶⁰ For children of shoemakers, see Lucien Perrin, glass carver living at No. 100 in the 1880s and 1890s (AD88, 4E420/4-66262, Sainte-Barbe, 1838, No. 24, birth, 3.05.1838); of clogmakers, Chrétien Doerflinger, a glass worker at No. 100 in 1891 (FNA, BB/11/1464, 2256 x 78, Marriage certificate, Rosteig, 1.07.1861); of boilermakers, Marie Céleste Grandgérard, glass polisher living at No. 96 in the early 1880s (SDMA, E241, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1884, No. 327, 4.10.1884); of cartwrights, Fernand Gabriel Brassart, metal worker at No. 98 in 1891 (AD 59, 1MiEC 092 R001, Bouchain, marriages, No. 36, 30.04.1872); of road menders, Alfred Brunet, a factory worker at No. 100 in 1896 (AD59, Iwuy, M [1861-1880], marriages, 1872, No. 21, 24.07.1872). For only a few early examples of residents who were born to farm labourers, see Joseph Dugué and Émile Baud, two railway workers respectively from Bretagne and the Massif central living in the cités in the early 1890s (AD 56, Noyal-Pontivy, marriages, 1875, No. 9, 21.01.1875; SDMA, E295, deaths, 1896, No. 439, 12.05.1896); Ambroise Socquet, a carter from Savoie, at No. 102 in 1896 (AVP, V4E8878, 9th arr., 1901, marriage, No. 520, 11.05.1901).

²⁶¹ For a few examples, see ASC Acquafondata, Registro della popolazione, 1911; ASC Pozzilli, 1889, births, No. 70, 1.09.1889, Pirolli Camilla di Giacinto; ASC Rocca d’Arce, 1847, births, No. 55, Pasquale Greco, 26.08.1847; ASC Casalvieri, births, 1850, 104, 1850.09.28, Carlesimo Giuseppe; MA Valle de Valdebezana, births, 1876, No. 20, 2.07.1876, Jacinto Varona y Gómez; MA Merindad de Valdeporres, births, 1885, No. 93, 26.04.1885, Marcelino Lopez Saíz; MA Mesas de Ibor, births, 1892, No. 38, 28.11.1892, Teófila Joséfa Trenado Gómez. This was not limited to migrants from those regions: see AD22, Plounévez, 1895, marriages, 14.03.1895, Yves Marie Le Mignot and Marie Perrine Garandel (at No. 100 in 1896).

²⁶² M. Baron, son of market gardeners, born in 1898, quoted by Pierre de Peretti, Saint-Denis 1870/1920, *Les Témoins parlent*, Archives municipales de Saint-Denis, 1981, 4–5. (“People would find work, but it paid almost nothing”).

judicial records and requests of relief received by the mayor of Saint-Denis, highlights the slow growth of male residents' salaries in the late 19th century.

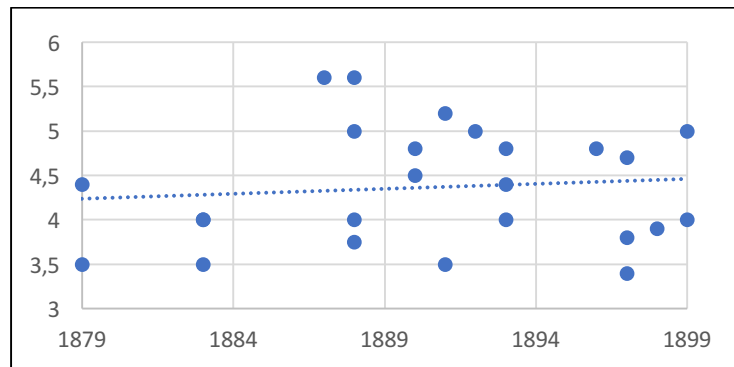


Figure 32: Wages of male adult residents of the cités, 1879-1899 (francs per day)²⁶³

At that time, most male residents would make around 4.5 francs a day, either at the glass factory, the railroad or even in new industries such as Renault, whose very first employees included someone living at No. 100.²⁶⁴ This figure, based on monthly earnings, is lower than the average of 6 fr. given by Jean-Paul Brunet in his monograph on Saint-Denis as a whole. This may be related to the fact that work was so exhausting, in particular at Legras, that residents could not go to their factory every working day of the month.²⁶⁵ Residents on the city's payroll were a little more compensated for menial jobs, but their pay remained low.²⁶⁶ As for women, they were paid at most 50% of men's salaries.²⁶⁷ Although in the earliest years of presence of each immigrant groups, newcomers would earn less on average than their predecessors, the gender gap was much more profound than any correlation between earnings and geographic

²⁶³ Data about shopkeepers and craftsmen have been left aside.

²⁶⁴ AD93, 4U7/353, 5.12.1898, Bénard et Crosson c. Falquet.

²⁶⁵ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 436–7; Fernand Pelloutier, Maurice Pelloutier, *La vie ouvrière en France*, 1920, 76.

²⁶⁶ See for a former glassmaker turned municipal street cleaner, SDMA, CT151, Secours, 2.03.1910, Joseph Bour.

²⁶⁷ In the packing and shipping department at Legras, for instance, men earned an average of 130 fr. a month in 1903, and women only 50 (Charles Benoist, *art. cit.*, 169–94).

origin. By the late 1900s, some residents from Italy and Spain had become skilled workers and even foremen at Mouton and Legras, but that was not the case of women. During and after the Great War, inequalities in terms of income increased; not only between factory workers and people living on benefits, but also within factories, due to the increasing division of labour and mechanisation. And women, despite being hired in record numbers, only made up a tiny portion of the gender pay-gap.²⁶⁸

Economic hardship

Up until the Great War, residents had in general a hard time making ends meet, just like a substantial proportion of the Paris working class.²⁶⁹ As contemporary researchers demonstrated at the time, an income of 6 francs for a family of five was barely sufficient. Food expenses, in particular, would consume two thirds of the household's income.²⁷⁰ Traces subsist of residents taking on payday loans to cover current expenses –a luxury only available to the lucky few who had a permanent job.²⁷¹

The absent or negative inflation measured until the mid-1900s at the macro level was not reflected in rent prices in the cités.²⁷² It is true that rents were much more affordable there than their equivalents in Paris; some people moved into the cités precisely for the low rents, such as a father of seventeen children who had gone bankrupt four times in the 1890s.²⁷³ And yet rent prices picked up about 15% every ten years, an increase that was not followed by wages, except for those who managed to

²⁶⁸ Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 1111.

²⁶⁹ See Octave Du Mesnil and Charles Mangenot, *Enquête sur les logements, professions, salaires et budgets (loyers inférieurs à 400 francs)*, Paris: Chaix, 1899.

²⁷⁰ Marcel Lecoq, *La Crise du logement populaire*, Paris: Société immobilière de la région parisienne, 1912, 14.

²⁷¹ SDMA, CT242, "Exploits d'huissier, 1905-1913," Opposition sur salaire ou appointements inférieurs à 2000 francs, 30.06.1905, Auguste Berdot, cantonnier, av. de Paris 96.

²⁷² Brian R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics: Europe, 1750-1988*, New York (NY): Stockton Press, 1992, 840–1; Jeanne Singer-Kérel, *Le Coût de la vie à Paris de 1840 à 1954*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1954.

²⁷³ SDMA, CT806, "Demandes de secours, 1890-1891," Letter from M. Leroy, 100 Av. de Paris, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, no date [1890].

remain in the same factory. The increase rate was roughly similar before and after the Great War.

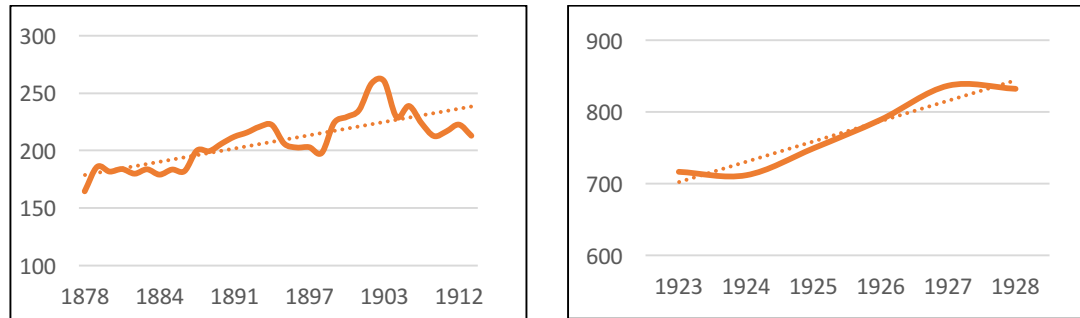


Figure 33: Rent prices in the cités (five-year moving averages, fr./year)²⁷⁴

The equivalence between the two periods is misleading though. Crossing sources, we were able to reconstruct 21 precise measurements of the income percentage spent by families on their rents in the cités, clustered in the two periods for which we have more accurate data (thanks to naturalisation files), 1880-1900 and 1920-1932. After increasing to 15-18% at the turn of the century, the share of the rent in the residents' budget fell to an average of 6% after the war.

²⁷⁴ Based on 253 pieces of data before 1914, and 25 after 1923, retrieved from judicial and notary records. Although information is often missing as to the characteristics of the apartment, we can rely on averages as the lodging in the cités were roughly similar in size and had from 1 to 2 bedrooms. When available, rent prices for the shops, workshops, and the hotel rooms at No. 102 have been removed in order not to skew the data.

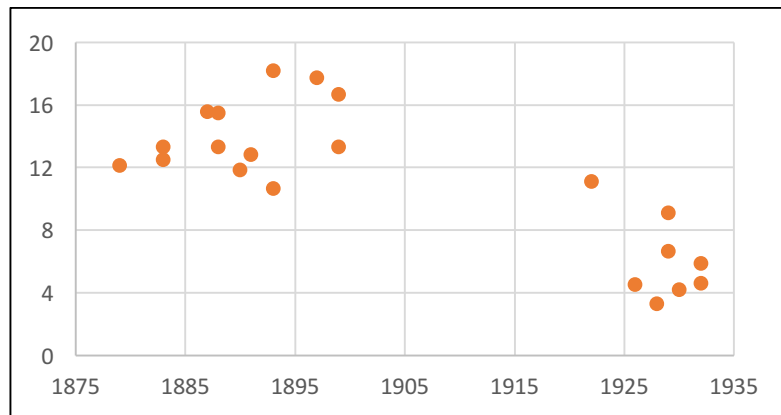


Figure 34: Rent as a fraction of the household's income
in the cités, 1879-1932 (%)²⁷⁵

Limiting the size of one's accommodation budget long characterised the working-class in general, which had low expectations and moved frequently between addresses.²⁷⁶ And yet what is often overlooked is that a lot of people simply could not pay their rent in time and fell into debt spirals as a consequence. In the cités, the factors that could lead residents to fall behind on their rents were multiple. They often had to do with death, old age or adverse circumstances which few could afford to hedge against. “*Je prends la liberté de vous écrire,*” a 35-year-old widow from No. 96 wrote to the Mayor in 1891, “*car il y a déjà cinq mois que mon mari est mort et je n’ai rien touché que cinq francs le mois passé... ce n’est pas avec 1 fr. 50 que je gagne par jour que je peux arriver à nourrir mes trois enfants et moi qui fait quatre, le plus grand qui a douze ans on ne peut le placer nulle part à cause de son infirmité... et en plus je suis*

²⁷⁵ The ratio in early years remains in the lower tier of those that have been calculated at a broader scale. See in particular Loïc Bonneval, François Robert, *L’Immeuble de rapport. L’immobilier entre gestion et spéculation, Lyon 1860-1990*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2013, 139–40. These authors indicate that a four-member working-class household in France in the 1900s would devote on average between 12 and 35% of its resources to paying the rent (based on Ministère du Travail et de la Prévoyance sociale, Statistique générale de la France, *Salaires et coût de l’existence à diverses époques jusqu’en 1910*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1911, 102).

²⁷⁶ Maurice Halbwachs, *La Classe ouvrière et les niveaux de vie*, Paris: Alcan, 1913, 425.

en retard de mon loyer, la propriétaire elle veut me mettre à la porte."²⁷⁷ When people fell sick, they stopped earning any money, and had to pay for doctors and medicine. In such instances, "*c'était la grande misère qui s'étalait tout de suite dans les familles.*"²⁷⁸

Rents were due every three months. It was customary for landlords to grant little extensions. But when tenants were too deep in debt or left the buildings, landlords like Louise Versigny and shopkeepers like the ones operating at the front of the cités would sue their debtors in court. Their goal was to eventually recover part of the outstanding rents via a sequester on the families' salaries, which maintained the noose around people's neck for a long time. In the last decades of the 19th century, Louise Versigny was a very active plaintiff. She obtained 61 court orders against her tenants between 1880 and 1900, against a total of 21 for her successors combined between 1901 and 1921.²⁷⁹ People could gain her trust, but also quickly fall from grace. Sources show she would extend credit to people she knew well, not only by delaying rents but also by lending them cash, to cover other debts. But the moments they stopped paying entirely, she would come after them.²⁸⁰

Forced evictions were rare, and people moved in general of their own accord.²⁸¹ But being sued always meant bearing, on top of the principal debt and interest, the extra burden of judicial fees, which amounted to about two days of work. At that rate, debts would pile up fast. In 1898, for instance, a resident at No. 100 employed at the railway

²⁷⁷ SDMA, CT806, "Demandes de secours, 1890-1891," Letter from Mme veuve Cuny, 96 av. de Paris, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, no date (October 1891). ("Allow me to write you this letter because five months have passed since my husband died and I have received only five francs last month... there is no way I can feed my three children and me with my daily earnings of 1 fr. 50, my eldest who is 12 cannot be employed anywhere because of his disability... and on top of that I am late on my rent payments, the landlady wants to kick me out.")

²⁷⁸ M. Baron, *doc. cit.* ("The great misery spread immediately in the families").

²⁷⁹ AD93, 4U7/450-745.

²⁸⁰ AD93, 4U7/542, 16.07.1897, Versigny c. Maire; 4U7/353, 21.04.1898, Joigny et autres c. Maire, tiers saisi Legras. Constant Maire had been a tenant of Louise Versigny's for about fifteen years when she lent him money.

²⁸¹ SDMA, CT241, "Exploits d'huissiers," 10.09.1912, Léon Désiré Victoor; 27.09.1912, Albert Rose.

company owed more than 1700 francs –more than a full year’s worth of work– to a vast number of creditors including Louise Versigny, the charcutier at No. 98, a baker, and two grocers. When he lost his job, he became utterly insolvent, and the landlady eventually recovered a mere 2.5% of her money.²⁸²

Rarely in a position to afford to attend hearings, let alone be represented by an attorney, residents had few opportunities to make their voices heard.²⁸³ When they did, in particular through their wives whose role was critical in that respect, they almost always secured extra delays, or rebates due to the poor state of their housing, which the landlords admitted to.²⁸⁴ On the following diagram, the spikes in litigation visible for 1897-1898 and 1901 correspond to several pushes to recover unpaid rents: first, when Louise Versigny moved to Paris and left the cités to a *locataire principal** who was keen on making his new investment profitable; and second, after her death, when her great-niece inherited the property.

²⁸² AD93, 4U7/354, 15.09.1898, Boucher et autres c. Brassard.

²⁸³ Absence at civil hearings was regarded as consent to the other party’s claim (see e.g. AD93, 4U7/601, 6.06.1902, Delamotte c. Chenal –“*qu’en ne comparaissant pas Chenal laisse présumer qu’il n’a aucun moyen à opposer à ladite demande*”).

²⁸⁴ Installments granted by the court were not necessarily a much better prospect than the seizure of salaries directly by the employer, usually capped at 10%. For residents in the 1880s and 1890s, installments ranged from 2 to 10 fr. every fortnight (AD93, 4U7/468, 9.11.1888, Versigny c. Tournier; 4U7/469, 8.03.1889, Versigny c. Forbras; 12.04.1889, Poullain c. Landry; 4U7/476, 29.05.1891, Versigny c. Louvriot; 4U7/487, 25.11.1892, Versigny c. Van Pé; 4U7/547, 10.12.1897, Replumaz c. Borne, Replumaz c. Lasselle). For the intervention of women from the cités on behalf of their husbands, see AD93, 4U7/467, 1.06.1888, Gautier c. Bourgeois; 4U7/472, 18.04.1890, Billon c. Gueury; 4U7/501, 9.02.1894, Billon c. Cédal; 4U7/507, 10.08.1894, Versigny c. Martens, Versigny c. Gailland. Only rarely did they have a formal power of attorney (see AD93, 4U7/489, 10.02.1893, Wagner née Houssemand c. Hebling), but in practice their informal plea was allowed by the court.

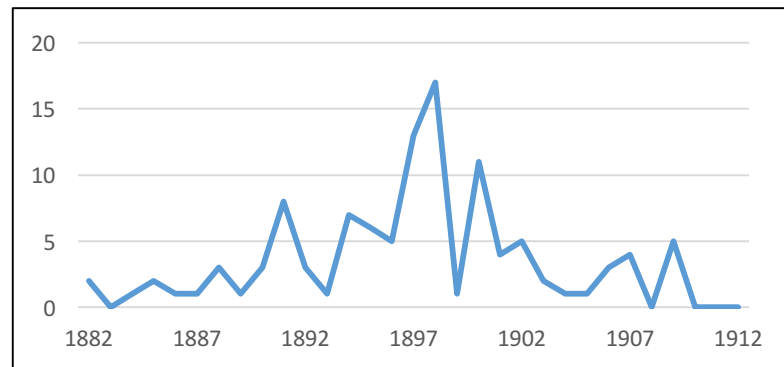


Figure 35: Number of civil suits filed by landlords at the Justice de paix over outstanding rents at 96-102 Av. de Paris, 1882-1912

Once a tenant was out, there was no problem finding a new one. In Saint-Denis, in the 1890s and 1900s, there was a constant shortage in small dwellings of one or two rooms. This is another factor of the densification of the existing apartments in the cités, and also accounts for the expansion of both the hotel at No. 102 and the furnished rooms at No. 96 and 100.²⁸⁵

Striving for a better life

Under those circumstances, families in which both parents had decent-paying jobs were bound to fare better. As a midwife, for instance, Caroline Herholt's income brought a significant supplement to her husband's income at Legras.²⁸⁶ Truly better

²⁸⁵ Claudine Fontanon, "La banlieue Nord-Est de Paris : structuration des espaces industriels et des zones de résidence," *Villes en parallèles*, No. 10 (June 1986), 19.

²⁸⁶ A midwife residing at No. 102 in the mid-1880s and who delivered a lot of babies in the cités, Caroline was compensated by the municipal *Bureau de bienfaisance** for the care she provided in the neighbourhood. Deliveries, which included 9 days of follow-up care, were reimbursed 7 francs in the late 1890s, 10 fr. after 1900, 12 fr. during the Great War and 20 fr. after 1918. She would also perform other acts such as giving vaccine shots or placing glass cups, which earned her 2 fr. each (SDMA, 1Q2, 26.07.1898; 27.07.1900; 1Q3, 29.04.1901; 1Q4, 27.02.1904; 1Q9, 26.10.1918; CT69, Letter from Mme Herholt ("Hérolt"), 102 av. de Paris, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 28.05.1885). Along with her husband's income as a stoker at Legras (FNA, BB/11/1650, 3545 x 82, Herholt), and more importantly the pension he started receiving from the factory from 1908, the couple was able to buy a bistrot in the impasse Chaudron and two houses, which in 1913 brought in 2,250 fr. per year and were worth 33,000

days, however, would only come at the later stages of people's career –for those who made it that far. One resident from No. 100 who had started at Legras's at 14 in 1885, would finally earn the full salary of an *ouvrier verrier*, 9.5 francs per day, twenty-five years later.²⁸⁷

The real solution to lift oneself out of poverty, remained the possibility of concurrently drawing income from an industrial job and a small business, launched by men but usually run by their wives on a daily basis. This aspiration was widespread and helps explain the record number of bars in the area. In the cités, people did not wait the interwar period to hold several jobs concurrently. Beside running a *garni** or going around as strolling merchants, residents who simultaneously ran a shop and worked in a factory were not uncommon. One of the grocers at the front of the cités was also a boilermaker;²⁸⁸ his successor a mechanic;²⁸⁹ yet another worked simultaneously as a plumber.²⁹⁰ For years, the owner of the bar at No. 98 spent his days at the packing department at Legras.²⁹¹ Demand for shops was so high that Louise Versigny decided to get involved, buying out and reselling the businesses herself, to have a share in the profit.²⁹² Parallel jobs were not limited to two. At No. 100 in the late 1880s, lived an individual who was at once a keeper at the cemetery, a rag-and-

fr. (APP, CB 92.9, 1912/1086, 28.10.1912; AD93, 1729W73, No. 218, Succession of Louis Herholt, 14.10.1913).

²⁸⁷ SDMA, CT96, Letter from the Préfet de la Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis about Louis Racollier, 17.11.1921.

²⁸⁸ See Étienne Billon, in AD93, 4U7/453, 18.11.1881, Billon c. Moriann, Billon c. veuve Cuny, Billon c. Maire; 4U7/454, 27.01.1882, Billon c. Brunoy; AD93, 1E66/131, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1883, No. 14, 13.01.1883; 1E66/183, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1883, No. 1088, 4.08.1883; SDMA, 1G95-6, Matrices des contributions mobilières et des patentes, 1884-1885; AD93, 4U7/458, 2.05.1884, Billon c. Mayer; AD93, 1E66/140, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1885, No. 14, 21.01.1885.

²⁸⁹ See Louis Crosson, in AD93, 4U7/495, 18.08.1893, Crosson c. Letourneur; SDMA, E276, Saint-Denis, births, 1893, No. 1343, 8.11.1893; AD93, 4U7/503, 27.04.1894, Crosson c. Thibaut; SDMA, 1F21, 1896 census, vol. 2, 98 Av. de Paris.

²⁹⁰ See Albert Coipeau, in SDMA, 1 F 27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 31.05.1911; SDMA, H 37, Military census, 1914; AVP, D4R1 1784, 1914, No. 5139.

²⁹¹ See Eugène Péchié, in *Archives commerciales de la France*, 14.04.1909, 478; AD93, 1E66/318, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1909, Vol. 1, No. 349, 19.06.1909; SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, Vol. 1, 98 av. de Paris.

²⁹² *Archives commerciales de la France*, 3.08.1891, 968.

bone man, and a cooper.²⁹³ Not to mention women, who were certainly the ones to accumulate the most jobs, even without taking into account the chores they were doing for their own family.



The cités and their residents underwent significant evolutions over time. Material expansion, decay, name changes, waves of migrants, variations in job diversity... All those elements combined to compose a constantly moving environment for residents. Despite –and partly because of– their turnover, the inhabitants of the cités regularly invested new symbolic meanings and boundaries into their habitat and its surroundings. Their cognitive maps changed as quickly, if not more, than the material environment itself. Hazards from structural weaknesses and decay constantly menaced the cités and their populations, and the war wreaked damage both on buildings and people. An increasing class and ethnonational division distinguished one building (No. 98) from the rest, starting at the beginning of the century.

And yet, continuities are just as visible as inflections. The cités always kept a demographic diversity in terms of gender, age and origins. Some of their components, such as the hotel at No. 102, the shops on the Avenue, the constructions at the back of courtyards, maintained a specific function and particular rhythms throughout. Gender inequalities in terms of domestic and professional roles remained largely stable, despite the particular experience of the Great War.

In order to further understand the relation between physical space and cultural boundaries, we shall now bring some kinetic energy into the picture. The next chapter will explore how migrations shaped, and were shaped by, the representations and decisions of residents.

²⁹³ AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.*, Jules Lelièvre.

CHAPTER 2

Identifications in motion: spatial mobility and the enactment of difference

Luigi Pirolli was born on the first day of the year 1886, in Demanio di Pozzilli, a hamlet of a few dozen farmers perched on the southernmost edge of the Samnite Appennines. Long before he made his way to No. 100 Av. de Paris with his father, brother, aunt and cousin in 1900, his immediate family had already gained a significant experience in migration.

For a start, Luigi's paternal uncles Agostino and Pietro Carlo had been on the move for several years. Like many others highlanders before them, they had decided to leave their village and work as strolling musicians.¹ In the early 1880s, they had performed in various regions of France, with a preference for Normandy, already crisscrossed by a number of their *compaesani*.² On the road, they had employed a young performer, a 16-year old from their village entrusted to them by his mother. Only a few weeks into the trip, the youth had been beaten –though not by them but by some unknown

¹ Maria Rosa Protasi, "L'emigrazione minorile dalla montagna italiana nel lungo Ottocento: tipologie e caratteri evolutivi," *Popolazione e storia*, 2008, No. 1, 9–33; John Zucchi, *The Little Slave of the Harp: Italian Child Street Musicians in Nineteenth-Century Paris, London, and New York*, Montreal, Kingston, London, Buffalo (NY): McGill-Queen's University Press, 1992.

² All the details on the uncles' journey are drawn from AS Roma, fondo Tribunale penale e civile di Roma, b. 4100, fasc. 28765, Tribunale correzionale di Roma, trial No. 7384, ruling 1.02.1883, and Corte d'appello di Roma, trial No. 28765, ruling 2.07.1883 (accounts in French newspapers, such as the one in *Le Petit Parisien*, 11.02.1883, are slightly inaccurate). On other Casertan and Molisan musicians in Normandy, see AD14, M3073-4, Étrangers, expulsions, 1870-1881 and 1877-1885, in particular Nicoletta Verrecchia (from Filignano), Carmel Carbone (from Acquafondata), Daniele Pirolli (from Pozzilli); Sylvie Granger, "Des musiciens venus d'ailleurs... dans les villes de l'Ouest, XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest*, Vol. 112, No. 3, Sept. 2005, 107–26. Historians who have specifically studied Italian migration in Normandy have paid little attention to travelling musicians: see e.g. Marielle Colin (ed.), *L'Immigration italienne en Normandie de la Troisième République à nos jours: de la différence à la transparence*, Caen: Musée de Normandie, 1998; *Id.*, François Neveux (eds.), *Les Italiens en Normandie: de l'étranger à l'immigré*, Caen: Musée de Normandie, 2000.

“Frenchman”— and abandoned to his fate on a beach in Normandy, without food nor shelter. Denounced, the Pirolli brothers had been tried in Italy, and eventually found guilty of violating the 1873 Italian law against employing minors in wandering trades. The sentence: one year in prison and a heavy fine. Not long after their release, however, they were already back in business in France.

When Luigi was still a little boy, both uncles, who regularly returned to Demanio, could already speak French.³ Furthermore, they were not his only relatives who had stories to tell about faraway places. Luigi’s first cousins Ernesto and Raffaele, having joined their father Agostino on yet another French tour in 1890-1891, could brag about what they had seen, what they had done. How much money they had made by playing the accordion and selling printed songs; how Ernesto had barely escaped an arrest; how Raffaele had spent two days in jail; how they had been eventually allowed to make their way to Jersey, in the Channel Islands, instead of being deported to Italy.⁴

Luigi’s father Giacinto would also leave for long periods of time, and not only to drive transhumant herds across the green hogbacks of Cassinese. In the spring of 1890, he and yet another of his brothers embarked in Naples, for New York.⁵ Giacinto only returned to Demanio in 1893 or early 1894.⁶ This second –documented– migration venture made transoceanic emigration another option for the family. Not only would Giacinto cross the Atlantic again, but his brother Agostino’s widow would emigrate permanently to the United States with her children in 1913. On the other hand, since Giacinto would leave for the Plaine-Saint-Denis only a few years later, it is doubtful

³ AD27, 4 M 29, Auguste Pirolli, 20.04.1885; AD14, M3077, *doc. cit.*; ASC Filignano, marriages, 1889, Agostino Pirolli and Francesca Di Meo, 14.08.1889; ASC Pozzilli, births, Vincenzo Pirolli, 7.09.1894; Filippo Pirolli, 5.11.1899.

⁴ AD14, 3U4 966, Tribunal de Lisieux, 16.03.1891, Pirolli Augustin *et al.*; 2U4 1599, Cour d’appel de Caen, 22.04.1891, Pirolli Augustin.

⁵ U.S. National Archives, *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York*, M. 237, R. 546; L. 1; No. 460.

⁶ ASC Pozzilli, 1893, deaths, No. 3, 12.01.1893; 1895, births, 1895, No. 12, 29.02.1895.

that in that particular instance, the temporary trip to America had been enough of a financial success.⁷

Those early movements of the Pirolli family were to be followed by many others, some of which we shall follow throughout this chapter. They illustrate, first, the importance of analysing migrants' spatial motions as "micro-events,"⁸ revealing particular combinations of structural possibilities and individual agency. Even more importantly, this type of movement—but also the unrealised journeys—can also be dealt with as moments of identification and symbolic boundary-making, not only for those who moved, but also for those who did not. That is to say that the socio-cultural dynamics of difference, whether based on ethnicity, gender, class or some other parameter, can be regarded as enacted through those spatial movements, which can be the cause or the consequence of such dynamics. So far, that dimension of mobility has been by and large neglected by migration historians, as opposed to scholars from other disciplines.⁹

The point of this chapter is to assess the social workings of spatial mobility, and ultimately its cultural impact on the residents' identifications, whether that mobility was active—moving oneself—or passive—staying put while others were moving. When and how did the residents move? To do so, which motives did they respond to, which networks did they mobilise? To what extent did spatial motions result from, and have an influence on, ethnicity, gender or class dynamics?

⁷ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016; Int. Andoloro (No. 8), 28.01.2017.

⁸ Randall Collins, "The Micro Contribution to Macro Sociology," *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 6 (1988), No. 2, 242–53; Arlette Farge, "Penser et définir l'événement en histoire. Approche des situations et des acteurs sociaux," *Terrain*, No. 38 (2002), 67–78.

⁹ Efforts to examine that cultural effect of migration have included Ramaswami Mahalingam (ed.), *Cultural Psychology of Immigrants*, Mahwah (NJ): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 2006; Jennifer Burns, *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013; Ulla D. Berg, *Mobile Selves: Race, Migration, and Belonging in Peru and the U.S.*, New York (NY): New York University Press, 2015.

The chapter's three sections are meant to answer these questions as they applied to the occupants of the cités. The first one focuses on movement to, within and from the cités; the second, on the particular case of child-migration schemes; the last one deals with relative mobility, when change happened to those who were not the ones on the move.

2.1. Moving to, within, and out of the cités

Migration decisions for residents were always the result of conscious decisions within a range of possibilities. These were different for everyone and changed constantly, under the influence of push and pull factors, ways and means of mobility, and migration networks.

The push and pull factors

Economic conditions unsurprisingly played a decisive role. In some French provinces, such as Brittany, demographic pressure and stagnant agricultural wages pushed many out.¹⁰ In the north of Spain, a surge in wheat prices in the winter of 1903-1904 was felt all the more acutely that the population density had soared.¹¹ Spanish

¹⁰ On Brittany, Marcel Le Moal, *L'Émigration bretonne*, Spézet: Coop Breizh, 2013; Jean Lemoine, *art. cit.*; Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday*, *op. cit.* On other regions, see Abel Châtelain, "L'attraction des trois plus grandes agglomérations françaises: Paris-Lyon-Marseille en 1891. Migrations parties des départements français selon le lieu de naissance," *Annales de démographie historique*, 1971, 27-41; Abel Poitrineau, *Remues d'hommes: les migrations montagnardes en France au XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles*, Paris: Aubier, 1983; Gabriel Désert, "Les migrations des Bas-Normands au XIX^e siècle," in Joseph Goy, Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Évolution et éclatement du monde rural. France-Québec, XVII^e-XX^e siècles*, Paris, Montreal: EHESS, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1986, 57-74; Gilbert Maistre, "Les anciennes migrations savoyardes," *Hommes et Migrations*, No. 1166 (June 1993), 10-17; Jean-Marc Debarb et al., *Montbéliard sans frontières*, Montbéliard: Société d'émulation de Montbéliard, 1994.

¹¹ In the Merindad de Sotoscueva, for instance, the place of origin of more than thirty residents at Nos. 96 and 100 over our period, the population had increased more than six-fold in the second half of the 19th century (Manuel López Rojo, *Villarcayo. Capital de la Comarca Merindades*, Villarcayo: Imprenta García, 2008 (1st ed. : 1982). See also Jesús-Ángel Redono Cardenoso, "El turno de los campesinos: protesta social en la España rural del cambio de siglo (1898-1923)," *Revista de História*

emigrants from other regions were hardly better-off.¹² On rare occasions, sources record emigration motives in the residents' own words –at least as they were transcribed by police officers. In 1907, a resident at No. 100 had left his native Cantabria “où il ne pouvait gagner sa vie, pour travailler en France où il était à peu près sûr de subsister.”¹³ Two men who arrived at No. 96 in 1923 from their native Extremadura, respectively declared that they had emigrated “par manque de travail,” and because “la vie en Espagne était difficile.”¹⁴

In Luigi Pirolli's native area near Cassino, shrinking wood resources, crop prices brought down by foreign competition, and insufficient revenues from domestic work and employment in local textile mills had turned emigration into an appealing option by the early 1880s.¹⁵ We know that neither of Luigi's two uncles earned enough to pay

da *Sociedade e da Cultura*, Vol. 12 (2012), 393–415; Pascual Madoz, *Diccionario geográfico, estadístico y histórico de España y de sus posesiones de Ultramar*, Madrid: Madoz & Sagasti, 1984, vol. 2 (first ed. 1849).

¹² The population of Navalmoral de la Mata, in Extremadura, whence many residents began to arrive in the early 1910s, had grown more than 20% in the first decade of the 20th century; most of the increase was due to migrants from smaller communities in the surroundings, hit hard by economic fluctuations and recurring conflicts between labourers and *latifundistas*, echoing broader social tensions palpable throughout the kingdom. See José Bueno Rocha, *Navalmoral, 600 años de vida*, Navalmoral de la Mata: Ayuntamiento de Navalmoral de la Mata, 1985, 180. See also Pilar Arellano-Ulloa, *Le Champ de luzerne*, Paris: Le Manuscrit, 2010, 13; Int. Arellano-Ulloa (No. 31), 18.08.2016.

¹³ FNA, 19780030/257, 3032 x 48, Miguel Barquin (“where he could not make a living, in order to work in France where he was almost sure of being able to subsist”).

¹⁴ FNA, 19780007/234, 13409 x 46, Sotero Moreno; FNA, 19780314/237, 23223 x 48, Pedro Trenado. This echoes the “great misery” remembered for the 1920s by another emigrant from Old-Castille (SDMA 9 SD 403, Ricardo Diez, “Un hombre de Castilla,” 84-page memoir, no date [completed after 17.01.1983]).

¹⁵ The market price of the hundredweight of grain fell from 37.55 lire in 1876 to 26.40 in 1881. See Ercole Sori, *L'emigrazione italiana dall'Unità alla seconda guerra mondiale*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1979, 115. On wood resources, Pietro Tino, “La montagna meridionale: boschi, uomini, economie tra Otto e Novecento,” in Piero Bevilacqua, *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana in età contemporanea*, vol. 1: *Spazi e paesaggi*, Venice: Marsilio Editori, 1989, 677–754. On the textile industry: Cesare Cantù, *Le Carnet d'un ouvrier*, Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1885 (transl. of the 4th Italian ed. by Régis Usannaz-Joris); Monica Lautieri, *Industrie manifatturiere e mondo tessile nell'Antica Provincia di Terra di Lavoro*, Villanova di Guidonia: Aletti, 2017. More broadly on the economic situation and its impact on emigration, Norberto Lombardi, “Dalle piccole patrie al Grande Molise,” introduction to Annalisa Carbone, *Le cento patrie dei Molisani nel mondo*, Isernia: Cosmo Iannone Editore, 1998, 10; Maria Rosa Protasi, *Emigrazione ed immigrazione nella storia del Lazio*, Viterbo: Sette Città, 2010; Piero Bevilacqua, “Società rurale e emigrazione,” in Piero Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi, Emilio Franzina (eds.), *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana*, Rome: Donzelli, 2001, 95–112; Sergio Romano, *Histoire de l'Italie du Risorgimento à nos jours*, Paris: Le Seuil, 1977, 88–90.

taxes, and both were officially regarded as “poor.”¹⁶ And yet they were probably not the poorest in the village. At the time of the Italian unification, their father had been living in a large, two-storey farmhouse, which he had bequeathed to his eldest son before relocating to another, smaller house nearby.¹⁷

On the mind of many candidates for emigration was also the need to escape the perils of crime and reckless violence. Every now and then, towns of the Castilian west were visited by *bandoleros* and Carlist rebels.¹⁸ In Italy, as Luigi Pirolli’s father Giacinto had been growing up, the area had been plagued by banditism, which the family had come to experience in the most direct fashion.¹⁹ For years in the area, the *briganti*’s victims and accomplices lived only yards apart, and tensions ran high. Both the bandits and law enforcement, whose repressive measures proved particularly harsh, could be manipulated to settle personal feuds. Even Giacinto’s own brother Agostino, only 16 at the time, had been suspected of complicity with the brigands.²⁰ In later decades, crime receded but did not vanish altogether.²¹

¹⁶ See AS Roma, *idem*, 91–100.

¹⁷ ASC Pozzilli, busta 13, Catasto fabbricati, vol. 1, [no date], partita No. 317, Pirolli Alessandro fu Antonio. Also, Luigi’s father was sometimes referred to as “*benestante*” (owning property) in birth records, which suggests he owned his cattle or a plot of land (ASC Pozzilli, births, 18.07.1900, No. 44, Mariano Pirolli di Giacinto).

¹⁸ See e.g. Domingo Quijada González, *Bohonal de Ibor: nuestro pueblo, nuestra gente, nuestra historia*, Navalmoral de la Mata: Publisher Navalmoral, 2000, 73.

¹⁹ One day in February 1867, a band of outlaws had raided the house of Giuseppe Pirolli, a relative of Giacinto, a few houses up the road. Giuseppe’s parents, wife, brother and sister-in-law had been killed, and two of his sons maimed in the attack (AS Isernia, fondo sottoprefettura di Isernia, atti di polizia, SS.9, No. 11-39-1868).

²⁰ Franco Molfese, *Storia del brigantaggio dopo l’Unità*, Milan: Feltrinelli, 1983 (6th ed.). Agostino was arrested five times in the following years for suspicion of theft, and serve six months in jail in 1872–1873. See AS Roma, fondo Tribunale penale e civile di Roma, b. 4100, fasc. 28765, Tribunale correzionale di Roma, trial No. 7384, ruling 1.02.1883, and Corte d’appello di Roma, trial No. 28765, ruling 2.07.1883, 68–9.

²¹ In the mid-1900s, a few years before a migrant from the same area arrived at No. 96 after a detour to Germany, his mother had been killed in their village, and his father had barely escaped death at the hands of henchmen sent by his landlord. If their descendant’s recollections are accurate, the motive was to prevent them from gaining possession, as expected, of their plot of land at the end of their lease. Int. Gino Rongione (No. 50), 21.07.2016.

Alsatian and Lorrainer residents were the ones whose migration decisions were the most likely to have had a political overtone. Some of them had migrated early and “opted” in time for French citizenship. That was the case of a handful of families, including that of François-Charles Sommer, at No. 96, who started at Legras as early as 1867, aged 20.²² But many residents from the annexed provinces came later to the Plaine, in the early 1880s, more to find better wages than for political reasons.²³ German rule, in small communities of the East, had barely changed anything.²⁴

There is little evidence that those Alsations and Lorrainers who migrated did so because of a greater attachment to France than others in their community.²⁵ For one thing, more had done their duty in the German military than they were ready to admit.²⁶

²² SDMA, E43, Registres de déclarations d’option de nationalité pour les Alsaciens-Lorrains, 19.05.1872-17.06.1872, No. 384, 2.06.1872; E 50, *Id.*, 23.09.1872, No. 1313; FNA, BB/31/445, Solhmma-Soontag; SDMA, 1112, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to the Minister of Commerce and Industry, “Médaille d’honneur en faveur du nommé Sommer François-Charles, ouvrier verrier,” 8.12.1897. François-Charles married Barbe Engelmann (pictured in chapter 1). Other residents who had opted included Jacob Helbling (No. 100, 1888-1889), David Winckler (No. 96, 1886-1890) Jean Offner (No. 98, 1911-1928), Nicolas Souvigné (No. 100, 1884-1887), Antoine Isz (No. 100, 1882-1896), Jacques Isz (No. 96, 1882-1898) Jean Nicolas Simon (No. 100, 1893) and their respective families (see AVP, D4R1 528, 1888, No. 2650; D4R1 490, 1887, No. 2732; D4R1 609, 1890, Nos. 3601, 3790; D4R1 645, 1891, No. 658; D4R1 731, 1893, No. 1479; D4R1 779, 1894, No. 1372). On this issue, see Alfred Wahl, *L’Option et l’émigration des Alsaciens-Lorrains (1871-1872)*, Strasbourg: Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 1973.

²³ The average point of immigration of 34 families of residents of the cités from Alsace-Lorraine – all those for whom we have been able to retrieve this information – was in the fall of 1881. See parisenement.eu, “Naturalisation files.”

²⁴ Alfred Wahl, *Confession et comportement dans les campagnes d’Alsace et de Bade, 1871-1939*, Strasbourg: Coprur, 1980; Alfred Wahl, Jean-Claude Richez, *La vie quotidienne en Alsace entre France et Allemagne, 1850-1950*, Paris: Hachette, 1993. Even propagandists acknowledged that economic and social conditions had not been particularly altered by the annexation: see Anonymous (“Un Alsacien”), “Un Village d’Alsace-Lorraine en 1914,” *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1914, 875–88.

²⁵ A descendant of Lorrainer glassmakers at Legras recalled being told by her grandparents that their own forebears emigrated to the Paris area “*pour ne pas devenir allemands*.” Int. Gaudron (No. 29), 21.10.2016 (“so as not to become German”). But that may be a retrospective distortion, as that family only emigrated years after the annexation (see FNA, BB/11/1502, 2506 x 79, Clementz).

²⁶ For residents claiming to have dodged the German draft, see FNA, BB/11/1725, 6053 x 83, Jacques Bricks; BB/11/2185, 9634 x 88, Georges Schertz. This was not necessarily viewed favourably by French authorities. According to the official form for recovering French citizenship, direct reintegration – skipping the intermediary, 3-year residency status of “*admission à domicile*” – could only be granted to men who bore an emigration license from the German authorities, a certificate of dismissal from the German army, or a proof that they had served in the French military (see e.g. note 1 on the form entitled “Demande de réintégration Alsaciens-Lorrains,” in FNA, BB/11/2222, 13359 x 88, Jacques Buchholzer). In the Plaine, Alsations with an emigration license were rare; that was the case of

Second, they made no mystery that economic motives came before any other considerations. A father of seven from Lorraine who lived at No. 100 from the early 1890s candidly said that his resources had not allowed him to emigrate earlier.²⁷ Neighbours of his referred to “*intérêts*” they had had to “*sauvegarder*” in their native region,²⁸ when they did not allege to have been ill for the entire option period.²⁹ Another tenant at No. 100 “*travaillait en Alsace et espérait que cette province ne resterait pas longtemps allemande.*”³⁰ This mindset is likely to have been shared by a large number of residents from the East, for whom the political situation, though maybe not entirely irrelevant, was clearly secondary to day-to-day concerns.

Residents were thus in multifaceted situations when it came to push factors. If almost all were lower-class, some were poorer than others, and the impetus for leaving their birthplace could vary significantly from one family to the next.³¹ All the more so since push factors could have very idiosyncratic characteristics.³²

This general backdrop explains how the factors behind wartime movements, despite being unprecedented for most residents, would follow some familiar patterns. In the late summer of 1914, as French male residents joined their units, many others fled

Pierre Schiel, whose parents had lived at No. 100 in the mid-1890s and who came to France in 1903 (FNA, BB/11/4804, 5866 x 08, Pierre Schiel).

²⁷ FNA, BB/11/2294, 5892 x 89, Joseph Bour. This reason was also mentioned by other glassworkers in the same situation: see FNA, BB/11/2190, 10120 x 88, Frédéric Kremer.

²⁸ FNA, BB/11/1981, 2472 x 87, Florent and Madeleine Fixari; FNA, BB/11/1491, 1462 x 79, Florent Diédât (“interests... to safeguard”).

²⁹ FNA, BB/11/1464, 2263 X 78, Chrétien Wernert and Marie Franck. This excuse was not unheard of, see FNA, BB/11/1502, 2506 x 79, Jacques Clementz; BB/11/1725, 6006 x 83, Georges Feisthauer and Marie Anne Winkler; BB/11/1711, 4636 x 83, Marie Catherine Gries, veuve Dimnet.

³⁰ FNA, BB/11/2033, 7604 x 87, Martin Orth (“had a job in Alsace and hoped that the province would not remain German for very long”).

³¹ On residents who had emigrated to dodge the military draft, see chapter 4.

³² An example of this is the itinerary of Marguerite Guébin, from the Loire valley, who moved in with her husband at No. 98 in the mid-1900s. She had grown up in a wealthy family, until her father, a swindler, had abandoned his wife and children and left them dispossessed, prompting Marguerite to marry well below her former social condition. Int. Ms. Le Bozec (No. 15), 15.04.2016; AD93, 1E66/262, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, births, 1908, vol. 2, No. 1584, 8.12.1908; 1E66/266, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, births, 1910, vol. 2, No. 1450, 30.11.1910; SDMA, 1911, 1921, 1926, 1931, 1936 Censuses, 94 Av. de Paris/Wilson.

before the advance of the German armies, through private journeys or public-funded “repatriations” to their native region or country.³³ Luigi Pirolli left with his wife and newborn son sometime in September, and in the cités many others did as well.³⁴ The worrisome military situation combined with a massive disruption of the local economy.³⁵ Factories all but halted their production for want of both customers and manpower. Legras was left with only 250 employees in November 1914, an 80% drop.³⁶ The steel-casting department of Mouton closed, leading a jobless Manuel Arellano, at No. 96, to temporarily go back to Spain.³⁷

And yet in some ways, the war was just another economic crisis, and returning home a classic solution which residents had already resorted to in times of hardship. Other indirect factors played a role too, at least for French people of rural extraction. They needed to promptly reach their birthplace in order to help their families with the harvest, in jeopardy now that so many men had left for the army –an unprecedented reversal of the pull factors in favour of rural regions.³⁸ The Plaine industries would

³³ On these movements, see also chapter 4, p. 379 *sqq.*

³⁴ See FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Luigi Pirolli (he mentions 1914 as the date of his trip to Italy, and his arrival registration filed upon his return is dated 17.03.1915); compare with FNA, BB/11/11264, 77542 x 28; FNA, BB/11/4698, 9356 x 07; FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14. Residents from No. 100 who left in the Summer included Christine Fallone née Pirolli, pregnant at the time, and her husband Alexandre (FNA, 19770888/135, 1781 x 36, Antonio Fallone). At No. 96, the Damatas, from Pontecorvo, and the family of Dominique Pirolli, from Acquafondata, left in August, as did Antonia Greco, from Roccadarce, a resident at No. 100 (AD93, 4U7/723, 27.10.1916, Veuve Gréco c. Lutel; 4U7/735, 1920 (1), 6.02.1920, Damata c. Veuve Barillier, and Pirollo c. Veuve Barillier). Jean-Baptiste Pezza, also a former resident of the cités who now lived nearby, left on August 2, 1914 (FNA, BB/11/11050, 66799 x 28). Serafino Greco and his wife, both of whom had also lived at No. 100, left in September 1914 (FNA, BB/11/10371, 32806 x 27, Séraphin Greco), and we know that Marie Rose Fraioli née Fresilli, another former resident, was also back in Roccasecca in late September when she gave birth to her son (FNA, BB/11/10314, 29478 x 27, Antoine and Marie Rose Fraioli). A number of other Italian glassworkers at Legras left in August and September 1914 (see e.g. FNA, BB/11/7005, 2531 x 19, Joseph Antoine Greco; FNA, BB/11/7503, 6621 x 21, Gérard Verrecchia).

³⁵ SDMA, 4 H 3/4, Internal notes, no date [summer 1914], permit delivered to Bailly René.

³⁶ FNA, F/12/8649, Légion d'honneur, Charles Legras (stating that the factory had 1,250 employees in 1909); SDMA, 4 H 3/13, Letter from the Director of Legras glassworking factory to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 17.11.1914.

³⁷ Letter from J. Mouton, director of the Aciéries et Laminoirs de la Plaine St-Denis, to Manuel Arellano, Bohonal de Ibor, 28.11.1914, private collection of Mme Arellano-Ulloa (Int. Arellano-Ulloa No. 31, 18.08.2016).

³⁸ See e.g. SDMA, 4H3/8, Letter from Reine Gauthier to the Mayor of Saint-Denis [September 1914].

quickly be back on their feet, however. By the beginning of 1915, order books were being rapidly replenished by State procurement of military supplies. Luigi Pirolli came back, as did Manuel Arellano. Three years later, as the Ludendorff Offensive threatened Saint-Denis yet again, the latter would travel to Spain once more, for a few months.³⁹ With the end of the war, the Plaine economy shrank yet again. Temporary workers were dismissed in a hurry, and most had no solution but to leave.⁴⁰

Sporadic downturns should not obliterate the overall attractiveness of the Plaine-Saint-Denis across our period. Opportunities in Paris and its suburban workshops acted as a strong magnet for migrants. On average, industrial wages were higher in the Paris area than elsewhere in France.⁴¹ That reality is visible at the micro level. We can estimate for instance that former shoemakers living at No. 100 –whether of leather clogs like Isidore Alphonse, from Normandy, wooden ones like Chrétien Doerflinger, from Alsace, or boots like Joseph Vaccari, from Romagna– would have earned at least 25% less if they had stayed in their trade instead of taking new jobs in the Plaine, where they respectively worked in metalworking, glass making, and construction.⁴² For those who were already glassworkers, the size of the Parisian market and a

³⁹ FNA, BB/11/8874, 13973 x 25, Ladislav Arellano.

⁴⁰ Not to mention colonial workers, most of whom were forcibly deported back to their region of origin (see on this point, APP, DB336, Report from the Préfet de police to the Minister of the Interior, 25.01.1921).

⁴¹ Jean-Marie Chanut, Jean Heffer, Jacques Mairesse, Gilles Postel-Vinay, “Les disparités de salaires en France au XIX^e siècle,” *Histoire & Mesure*, Vol. 10 (1995), No. 3-4, 381–409.

⁴² On Alphonse, see AD76, 4E05809, Realcamp, births-marriages-deaths, 1872, No. 28, 23.05.1872; SDMA, E 298, marriages, 02.01.1897-31.12.1897, No. 188, 22.05.1897. On Doerflinger, SDMA, 1F19, 1891 census, vol. 2, 100 Av. de Paris; AD67, 4E413/1, Rosteig, 1830, No. 19, 28.10.1830. A number of glassworkers at Legras from Alsace-Lorraine, including residents of the cités, had originally been clogmakers (e.g. Louis Winkler, resident at No. 96: see the 1863 marriage certificate in FNA, BB/11/1546, 2722 X 80, Adam Feisthauer; Frédéric Guehl, also from No. 96, FNA, BB/11/1524, 543 x 80). On Vaccari, AVP, V4E 4992, Paris 18th, births, 1879, No. 1334, 2.04.1879; AVP, V4E 6800, Paris 12th arr., deaths, 1887, No. 3522, 23.09.1887; SDMA, CT928, Déclarations d'étrangers, No. 1178, 2.12.1888. Around 1900, a pair of clogs would sell for around 1 franc, and a seasoned worker could make three per day (*Les Temps nouveaux*, 5.08.1905, A11, N14, 3; Colette Laffond, “L’industrie de la chaussure à Izeaux (Bas-Dauphiné),” *Revue de géographie alpine*, Vol. 34 (1946), No. 1, 69–85). Proper shoemakers were making between 2,5 and 5 francs a day (Yves Guyot, “Les industries, les salaires et les droits de douane,” *Journal de la société statistique de Paris*, Vol. 45 (1904), 137). At the same period, adult male workers in the Plaine made in general over 4 francs a day, and from 6 to 9 in qualified jobs (see chapter 1).

swelling turnover allowed Legras and his peers in the area to offer them higher wages than their smaller competitors in Eastern France.⁴³ Another important incentive to come to the Plaine-Saint-Denis was its high density of industries. The precariousness of daily contracts could only be offset by the possibility of finding work elsewhere if need be. During his years at No. 100, we know that a migrant from Arpino worked as a glass-bottle maker at Legras; a rolling mill operator at Mouton; a metal-worker at Nozal; and a steel-caster at Albert.⁴⁴ A neighbour of his from northern Spain changed employers eight times between 1918 and 1930.⁴⁵ As one Plainard would remember it, “*on sortait d’une boîte, le lendemain matin on entrait dans une autre.*”⁴⁶

Job related factors also played a major role in families’ decisions to leave the cités. Long working hours, and the cost-cutting necessity of having lunch at home,⁴⁷ led everyone to try and live as close as possible from their workplace. Chrétien Doerflinger, the former clog-maker, took another job in Aubervilliers and moved there with his family.⁴⁸ An Italian neighbour of his moved to the Mouffetard area in Paris for the same reason.⁴⁹ But jobs were not the only factors prompting an address change. Military service and war led many to move permanently as well, when their jobs and dwellings had changed hands by the time they returned. An Italian from No. 100 who had left for the front had to resettle in La Villette when he came back.⁵⁰ Some did retain their lodging, however, through a system that involved agreements between them and

⁴³ At the same working position, in 1911, the average monthly earnings in Portieux (Vosges) were 65 francs, in Bayel (Aube), 120, and at Legras’s, 140. See Philippe Picoche, “Une entreprise vosgienne. La verrerie de Portieux (1850-1950),” doctoral diss. in history, University of Lyon II, 2000, 161.

⁴⁴ See FNA, BB/11/11167, 72601 x 28, Pascal Puzzuoli.

⁴⁵ FNA, 19770897/190, 41813 x 38, Nicolas Martínez.

⁴⁶ SDMA, 121 AC W 9, Fascicule “Interviews expo 1870-1920,” Int. M. Bitsch et M. Persancier, 2. (“We would leave one company, and the next morning we would be hired by another one”).

⁴⁷ Factories only started to set up affordable canteens after the Great War (Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 1115).

⁴⁸ MA Aubervilliers, 1E170, 1893, deaths, No. 152, 29.03.1893.

⁴⁹ FNA, BB/11/10746, 51570 x 28, Joseph Della Valle.

⁵⁰ FNA, BB/11/11367, 82663 x 28, Gélorme (“Jérôme”) Pirolli.

the concierges, or some of their neighbours.⁵¹ Luigi and Maria Pirolli were in that case, although the exact details remain unclear.⁵²

Beside economic and social factors, migration culture and experience were critical in decisions to make the journey, either to the Plaine or away. Some had long been accustomed to moving within the rural context.⁵³ Even before his uncles began migrating, Luigi Pirolli's forebears had long been on the move, albeit over short distances.⁵⁴ A little further north, Pasquale Greco, who would be the Pirollis' neighbour at No. 100, had been roaming the mountains for years, for the sake of both legal and illegal endeavours.⁵⁵ In these parts, emigration had started early in the 19th century.⁵⁶ In northern Spain, the migration culture was similar, combining traditions of transhumance, smuggling, and inter-village connections. A longtime Cantabrian resident at No. 100, for example, had first migrated to another village less than two miles away from his birthplace, where he had stayed for a few years.⁵⁷ In Lorraine, Chrétien Doerflinger, the clog-maker, had long been living outside his town's limits,

⁵¹ See e.g. AD93, 4U7/735, 6.02.1920, Damata ("Damoto") c. Veuve Barillier; APP, CB 92.15,1918/1064, 24-29.09.1918.

⁵² They managed to retain their flat during the winter of 1914-1915 and between May 1915 and 1919. It is possible that Luigi's father, who came back with him to the Plaine in 1915 and was later joined by his wife, stayed there for the duration of the conflict (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016; Int. Parravano, No. 52, 28.10.2016; FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis Pirolli). The fact they were in friendly terms with their landlord, a retired glassworker from Legras's, certainly helped on that score. FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Rapport du Préfet de Police à M. le Garde des Sceaux, Service des déchéances, 2.05.1945; SDMA, CT1005, 4 imp. Trézel, M. Jeandel; AD93, 1E66/274, Saint-Denis, births, 1914, vol. 2, No. 836, 29.06.1914, Albert Pirolli, witness M. Jeandel.

⁵³ Abel Châtelain, in particular, has shown that the rural world was a far cry from a stereotyped picture of immobility. See "Les migrations temporaires françaises au XIX^e siècle. Problèmes. Méthodes. Documentation," *Annales de démographie historique*, 1967, 9-28.

⁵⁴ Luigi's paternal grandmother Isabella came from Mastrogiovanni, the section of the nearby town of Filignano that was the closest to Demanio, and with which the Pirollis had long been in close contact: Mastrogiovanni was where the own father of Luigi's grandfather Alessandro had been born at the end of the 18th century (Int. Parravano, No. 52, 28.10.2016; Int. Salvatore, No. 5, 15.01.2017).

⁵⁵ AS Frosinone, b. 573, Letter from the Delegato di Pubblicità Sicurezza di Arce to the Sottoprefetto of Sora, "Associazione a delinquere a carico di Greco Pasquale ed altri," 8.06.1895.

⁵⁶ In Acquafondata, 5.5% of the population emigrated in 1825, and another 9% in 1841-3. See Enrico Pistilli, *Acquafondata e Casalcassinese*, Acquafondata: Comune di Acquafondata, 2004, 86.

⁵⁷ FNA, 19770897/190, 41813 x 38, Nicolas Martínez (resident at No. 100 av. Wilson from 1917 to at least the 1940's).

in the woods.⁵⁸ Some of his fellow Lorrainers had also been moving around their native region.⁵⁹ These small-scale mobilities were often responsible for broadening the horizons of emigration candidates, and prepared them to some extent for the constant movements required by urban life. For that matter, these previous mobilities were not only rural. A rag-and-bone man and longtime resident at No. 100, who belonged to a family of weavers from the Somme, had first spent years collecting rags in the north-east of Paris.⁶⁰

When it came to the residents' long-distance migrations, formal education certainly played a role in selecting and enabling aspiring migrants. Paradoxically less so, however, for qualified glassworkers, who by tradition started to learn their craft so early that they were hardly literate. Overall, literacy did help with administrative controls, learning a new language, and integrating into a new context. As children, Luigi Pirolli, his father and his uncles had certainly attended school. Not only did Demanio, in its heyday, have an elementary school, probably founded in the early years of the post-unity era.⁶¹ But records consistently show that Luigi's father and uncles were all able to read and write, a remarkable feat at the time.⁶² This higher-than-

⁵⁸ AD67, 7 M 646, 1856 Census, Rosteig, House No. 26. The daily life of 19th-century clog-makers is depicted by Alain Corbin in *Le Monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot. Sur les traces d'un inconnu (1798-1876)*, Paris: Flammarion, 1998.

⁵⁹ As demonstrated by the geographic dispersion of family members attending their wedding. See FNA, BB/11/1491, Florent Diédât and Marie Sophie Scholastique Schlernitzauer, excerpt of marriage register, 4.04.1864, No. 3, released by the municipality of Biberkirch, German Lorraine, 14.03.1879. Their witnesses, all family members, came from Vannes-le-Châtel, Troisfontaines, Saint-Louis and Walscheid.

⁶⁰ SDMA, H 28 and AVP, D4R1 920, Military registers, 1897, No. 1993; *Bulletin municipal officiel de la ville de Paris*, 6.12.1888, p. 2678; AD80, 5Mi D828, Flixécourt, marriages, No. 1, 24.02.1876. On the rag-and-bone people more broadly, see Alain Faure, "Classe malpropre, classe dangereuse ? Quelques remarques à propos des chiffonniers parisiens au XIX^e siècle et de leurs cités," *Recherches*, No. 29 (Dec. 1977), 79–102; Jean Héritier, "La peste des chiffonniers," *Histoire*, No. 51 (Dec. 1982), 97–9; Raymond Carre, "Chiffonniers de Paris au XIX^e siècle. Une industrie aux mille productions," *Gavroche*, No. 20 (March-April 1985), 23–8; Antoine Compagnon, *Les Chiffonniers de Paris*, Paris: Gallimard, 2017.

⁶¹ Comune di Pozzilli, Scuola elementare Demanio, Attestato di compimento del corso elementare inferiore, Mariantonia Pirolli di Luigi, Pozzilli, 31.07.1918, private collection of M. and Mme Thomas (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016).

⁶² In 1861, only 14% of adult men of the Molise and Abruzzi regions were thought to be literate, a proportion that was undoubtedly lower still for farmers like the Pirollis. Ministero dell'Istruzione

average human capital was actually not exceptional at 96-102 Avenue de Paris, especially for non-glassworkers born after 1850.⁶³ This is a testimony to the rapid opening of schools –primarily for boys– in small towns of France, Spain and Italy from the middle of the century.⁶⁴

Despite being generally less educated and less mobile than men, mothers and sisters' own experience was also of great importance. We do not know whether Luigi's 50-year-old aunt Teresa, the widow of his late uncle Antonio, had ever left Pozzilli before. What is certain is that she had developed, during the years she spent raising her children while her husband was in America, some of the skills that prepared her to move to the Plaine with her youngest son.⁶⁵

The most important know-how for long-distance mobility however, remained the direct, individual experience of travel. Families of glassworkers were used to moving regularly, and those arriving into, or moving away from, the cités were no exception.⁶⁶

pubblica, *Statistica del regno d'Italia: Istruzione pubblica e privata, anno scolastico 1862-63*, Volume 2, Rome: Ministero dell'Istruzione pubblica, 1866, XXIII.

⁶³ On the literacy of residents, see chapter 3, p. 282 *sqq.* There are other explicit mentions of primary education in some naturalization files of residents, such as FNA, BB/11/4698, 9335 x 07, Adalgiso Carlesimo.

⁶⁴ Sira Serenella Macchietti (ed.), *Storia dell'educazione locale. Questioni ed esperienze*, Rome: Bulzoni, 1995; Jean-François Chanet, *L'École républicaine et les petites patries*, Paris: Aubier, 1996; Maria del Pilar Fraile Simón, "La enseñanza premaria en Navalmoral: la escuela antigua," in Ayuntamiento de Navalmoral de la Mata (ed.), *XIV coloquios histórico-culturales del Campo Arañuelo "Homenaje a los medios de comunicación de Navalmoral de la Mata," Noviembre de 2007*, Navalmoral de la Mata: Publisher Navalmoral, 2008, 135–66. In Navalmoral, future residents had contributed directly to the expenses of primary education, which represented about 13% of their local taxes in 1911 (see MA Navalmoral de la Mata, Legajo 100, Varios, 1898-1944, Segunda lista cobratoria, 1911, No. 313, Luengo Encabo Damián).

⁶⁵ Teresa joined Legras just like Giacinto and his sons. Her other children, a 15-year-old son and a 12-year-old daughter, were left behind in Demanio and would only join her in the Plaine-Saint-Denis at a later stage in the 1900-1910 decade. ASC Pozzilli, 1851, births, No. 27, 19.09.1851, Maria Teresa Vettese; 1885, No. 54, 22.06.1885, Giambattista Pirollo di Antonio; 1891, births, No. 81, 4.10.1891, Rosario Pirolli di Antonio; ASC Pozzilli, Leva 1885, Giambattista Pirollo di Antonio e Teresa Vettese; SDMA, 1F27, 1911 Census, 299. We know of another resident at No. 102, Francesca Carnevale née Di Ponio, who had emigrated to France with her mother, a widow, and her two sisters (Int. Van Kerkhove, No. 54, 14.09.2016).

⁶⁶ See Corine Maitte, *Les Chemins de verre: Les migrations des verriers d'Altare et de Venise (XVI^e-XIX^e siècles)*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009; Benoît Pinchard, "L'étude socio-

In the words of a contemporary commentator, “*le verrier est un nomade*.”⁶⁷ At the turn of the century, however, they were far from the only ones who had personal experience of long-distance travels. Aside from the Pirollis, cases of residents of Nos 96-102 who, before settling in the Plaine, had already migrated to the Americas, Britain, Germany and even Sweden became increasingly common.⁶⁸ Some had even already spent time in Paris years before their migration to the Plaine-Saint-Denis, like three Lorrainer residents at No. 100.⁶⁹ And after their sojourn in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, a significant number who did not elect to come back to their native country nor to stay in France ended up in many different places around the world. Former residents, in later years, would be found across the Americas, Britain, and Algeria.⁷⁰

généalogique des verriers. Problématiques, méthodes et perspectives,” *Éclats de verres*, No. 18 (Nov. 2011), 53-9.

⁶⁷ Maurice Talmeyr, “Chez les verriers,” *Revue des deux mondes*, No. 145, 1.02.1898, 644-5. (“The glassworker is a nomad.”)

⁶⁸ Here are some of the destinations residents emigrated to before settling in the cités: New York City (Bonaventura Pirolli, in 1891, see *Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1897*, NARA Series M237, Roll 561, 22 Jan. 1891, ship Maasdam; the Coipeaus, in 1894, see AD93 D2 M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census, Albert George Coipeau; Francesco Gabriele, Carlo Gabriele, Luigi Caruso in Mulberry street, in 1903, see National Archives at Washington D.C., *Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1897-1957*, T715, roll No. 368, ship Phoenicia, 19.06.1903); Philadelphia (Filomena Pirollo née Di Meo and her family from 1906 to 1914, see FNA, 19770898/81, 47492 x 38, Merucci; 19770894/46, 30297 x 37, Pirollo); Argentina (the family of Manuela Castaño née Lamy in the 1870s, see AD93 D2 M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census, 100 av. Wilson); Brazil (Jean Carnevale’s family around 1901, see FNA, 19780013/156, 21168 x 46; Int. Van Kerckhove, No. 54, 4.09.2016); Mexico (Claudio Saíz Martínez, from 1910 to 1913, see Julián Saíz, *Olvido o recuerdo*, *op. cit.*, 11-14); Stockholm (Carminella Gallaccio née di Meo and her family in 1908, see APP, 328 W 12, “Fichier des étrangers sur microfiches,” No. 850897); England (Jean Antoine Verrecchia and his wife Joséphine née Cocorrochia, separately, in the late 1910s, FNA, 19770881/45, 25656 x 33, and Int. Verrecchia, No. 40, 4.09.2016); Germany (Antonino Rongione, see Int. Rongione, No. 50, 21.07.2016).

⁶⁹ Antoine Isz, a resident at No. 100 from the early 1880s to the late 1890s, had lived in Paris with his wife in the mid-1860s before going back to Mosel (as inferred from the places of birth of his children Joseph, born in Paris in 1864, and Anselme, born in Brouderdorff in 1871: SDMA, E252, marriages, 1887, No. 63, 26.02.1887, Joseph Isz and Catherine Offner; AVP, D4R1 645, 1891, No. 658, Anselme Isz). Another one was a widow, Catherine Engelmann née Bernard (Barbe Sommer’s mother), who came for a first time to the Paris area in 1871, before going back to Lorraine and emigrating for good to Saint-Denis with her children the next year (Int. Besson, No. 27, 24.07.2016). As for Joseph Schiel, who left his native Mosel in 1890, he had first come to the Paris area under the Second Empire, more than thirty years before. See AD57, 7E19 5/7, Enchenberg, 1857, marriages, 23.09.1857, Joseph Schiel and Anne Huber (Joseph resided in Paris at the time); AD93, 4U7/507, 10.08.1894, Veuve Foucault c. époux Schiel (“Schill”); FNA, BB/11/2561, 5782 x 91, Joseph Schiel et Madeleine Schiel née Bour.

⁷⁰ A man born in Concacasale, near Pozzilli, in 1884, emigrated to Glasgow with his family in 1889, and after a brief sojourn in the Plaine-Saint-Denis at No. 100 av. de Paris around 1901, returned to Scotland, before reemigrating to the south of France in the 1920s (SDMA, 1F24, 1901 Census, 100 Av.

Journeys and itineraries

Looking at the trajectories of residents of 96-102 Avenue de Paris before their arrival in the Plaine can shed light on movements on land, and on trips within national borders, two categories that are much less known than movements across the Atlantic.⁷¹ They can also inform our understanding of the differences that could exist between residents in terms of the social and cultural impact of their passage in the cités. For some, the cramped buildings were synonymous with the discovery of urban life, Paris, or even France altogether. For others, it was just another address, which did not, in itself, carry the same weight of change.

First, the journeys themselves deserve some attention. In the early 1880s, Luigi's Pirollo uncles had probably travelled to France on carts, or at least on donkey-back.⁷²

de Paris; FNA, F/22/452, Rapport Drancourt, 25.07.1901; FNA, 19770876/18, 25377 x 32, François Salvatore). One of his neighbours at No. 100, from Saône-et-Loire, left for Cher, Normandy, and then Brighton, in England (AVP, D4R1 1295, 1905, No. 1897, Philippe Éléonore Lucien Thomas). Another, who had grown up at No. 100 in the 1880s, emigrated to Algeria in 1908 (AVP, D4R1 688, 1892, No. 3870, Georges François Pollet). A third one, present at No. 96 in the 1890s, lived in London in the late 1900s (AD78, 1R/RM 397, Military registers, 1908, No. 57, Fernand Lucien Pellé), as would a Spanish resident at No. 96 who left for London in the late 1920s (Balbino González, see FNA, 19770891/70, 42547 x 36, Florentino González). As for Giovanni Pirollo, born in 1907 in Philadelphia to Giulio Pirollo and Filomena Di Meo, he came to live at No. 100 with her mother and siblings in the early 1920s, before heading back to Philadelphia a few years later (see AD93 D2 M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census; FNA, 19770898/81, 47492 x 38, François Merucci and Enrica Pirollo).

⁷¹ The migrants' trips themselves have only recently started to attract scholarly attention. Compare, for instance, two conference proceedings from 2006 and 2007: Ercole Sori, Anna Treves, *L'Italia in movimento: due secoli di migrazioni*, Udine: Forum, 2008, in which the question was not addressed, and Giuseppe Moricola (ed.), *Il viaggio degli emigranti in America latina tra Ottocento e Novecento. Gli aspetti economici, sociali, culturali*, Naples: Alfredo Guida, 2008, in which it was. Modernists like Daniel Roche had raised the issue at an earlier date (see Daniel Roche, *Humeurs vagabondes : de la circulation des hommes et de l'utilité des voyages*, Paris: Fayard, 2003). On transatlantic journeys, see Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation...*, *op. cit.*; Jesús de Juana López, "Las vías de salida de la migración castellano-leonesa a América," in Juan Andrés Blanco Rodríguez, *La migración castellana y leonesa en el marco de las migraciones españolas*, Zamora: UNED, 2011, 229–49; Caroline Douki, "Protection sociale et mobilité transatlantique : les migrants italiens au début du XX^e siècle," *Annales HSS*, 2011/2, 375–410; Augusta Molinari, *Les migrations italiennes au début du XX^e siècle: le voyage transocéanique entre événement et récit*, Paris, Turin: L'Harmattan, 2014.

⁷² One of the witnesses at Agostino and Pietro Carlo's trial before the Appeal Court stated that Agostino and the two women who accompanied him were moving (*camminare*) faster than him and his son, which suggests they were not walking. See AS Roma, *id.*, 39. In later years, Pietro Carlo and his

It was not uncommon for migrants, in the late 19th century, to cover part or all the distance to Paris on foot –and the least fortunate even did it without shoes.⁷³ An important turning point, though, happened towards the end of the century, with the expansion of railway networks in the late 1880s and 1890s. In the span of a few years, Pozzilli, in Molise, Rosteig and Soucht, in Alsace, or the Merindades, in the province of Burgos, regions of origin of many future residents, became all directly connected to main cities or ports.⁷⁴

Not that all were necessarily able, or willing, to take advantage of these new means of transportation. Despite having already travelled on a boat from Naples for his military service, the No. 100 resident Bernardo Greco would still cross the border on foot in the Alps in September 1900; it remained the cheapest route, and also the safest for *padroni** like him, wary of administrative control.⁷⁵ For Spaniards as well, the price remained expensive, especially on the French part, only made worse by the weakness of the peseta. In the 1900s, reaching Bilbao may have cost 2 to 3 days of work for an

wife had a horse-carriage (AD14, Trévières, births, 1895, No. 19, 7.08.1895, Lucie Pirollo; Mondeville, births, 1897, No. 22, 25.09.1897, Émile Pirollo).

⁷³ Luigi Einaudi, “Un traffico infame di carne umana,” *La Stampa*, 26.05.1901; Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, *Parigi 1898. Con Zola, per Dreyfus. Diario di un diplomatico*, Bologna: CLUEB, 1998 (edited by Giovanni Tassani), 66–7; Patrick Heiz, “Émigration et travail des enfants,” *art. cit.*, 67. In the famous memoirs of Martin Nadaud, published in those years, the mention of childhood’s journey on foot to Paris in 1830 would not have sounded exotic to contemporary ears: see Martin Nadaud, *Mémoires de Léonard, ancien garçon maçon*, edited by Maurice Agulhon, Paris: Lucien Souny, 1998 (1st. ed. 1895), 54.

⁷⁴ In 1886, Venafrò, near Pozzilli, was connected to Rome and Naples, and from Naples, Molisani and Casertani migrants would travel to Marseilles –or to the Americas– by boat (Fernando Cefalogli, *Il Molise nell’Unità d’Italia*, Isernia: Cosmo Iannone Editore, 2011, 139). As for the “Ziggel,” connecting Rosteig and Soucht in Lorraine, it opened in the 1890s (Ernest Lenhardt, “Approche d’une étude sur la migration, au 19^e siècle, de verriers originaires de Wingen,” *Pays d’Alsace*, No. 99 (1977), 32; André Schontz, Arsène Felten, *Le Chemin de fer en Lorraine*, Metz: Éditions Serpenoise, 1999, 240–241; Conseil général du Bas-Rhin, *Rapports et délibérations*, 1865, 77). The “ferrocarril de la Robla,” built in Northern Spain to connect coal-mining areas to the industries of the Bilbao area, reached the Merindades (Espinosa, Pedrosa de Valdeporres, Sotoscueva, Ahédo) in the early 1900s (see Juan Pedro Aparicio, *Viaje en “el hullero”: de León a Bilbao en el ferrocarril de vía estrecha*, Madrid: Penthelon, 1982; Manuel López Rojo, *Villarcayo. Capital de la Comarca Merindades*, Villarcayo: Imprenta García, 2008 (1st ed. 1982), 107; Javier Fernández López, Carmelo Zaita, *El ferrocarril de la Robla*, Madrid: Aguilar Editores, 1987; Julian Saíz, *Olvido o recuerdo, op. cit.*, 14). In Extremadura, Navalmoral de la Mata had been connected to Madrid by train in 1878 (José Bueno Rocha, *Navalmoral, 600 años de vida*, Navalmoral de la Mata: Ayuntamiento de Navalmoral de la Mata, 1985, 154–6).

⁷⁵ Luigi Einaudi, *art. cit.*; *La Stampa*, 13.05.1896; FNA, BB/11/13376, 27779 x 30, Bernardo Greco.

adult peasant from the Cantabrian or Burgales highlands; from the border to Paris, it was about twenty times as much.⁷⁶ If companies like Legras and Mouton, or *padrones** scouring those regions on their behalf, had not offered to cover the price of train tickets, few would have been inclined to make the trip.⁷⁷ During the interwar period, trains became ubiquitous and Spaniards, Romanians or Czechs seen in the cités arrived much quicker and for cheaper prices. In any case, the travel budget did not reflect the residents' entire microeconomic calculus. As Georges Tapinos has pointed out, the cost of migration is not only financial, but also includes opportunity costs, and an uncertainty over the conditions of living and employment at the other end of the journey.⁷⁸

Travelling is not only about locomotion, but also about luggage. Sources in that regard suggest that apart from administrative documents,⁷⁹ most residents arrived to the Plaine with limited belongings: crucifixes, family photographs, articles of clothing, the odd cooking tool, a few coins.⁸⁰ Clichés of migrants with suitcases are by and large misleading; most carried their belongings in bundles or, as one family from No. 96 recalled, in makeshift trunks made of orange boxes.⁸¹ In the interwar period, a common

⁷⁶ The price on the French leg (Hendaye-Paris) was 60 fr. for 2 adults in 1909; children under 3 could travel for free and those aged 3 to 7 paid half price; 30 kgs of luggage were included per adult (*J.O.R.F.*, 21.06.1909, p. 6735). 30 fr. were worth about 40 pesetas in the mid-1900s (François Sauvaire-Jourdan, "La crise du change en Espagne," *Bulletin hispanique*, Vol. 7 (1905), No. 3, 293–304). On the Spanish side, we can estimate the price per passenger between Villarcayo and Bilbao at roughly 2.5 pesetas in the mid-1900s (Pedro Fernández Díaz-Sarabia, "El tráfico de viajeros en el ferrocarril de La Robla," paper presented at the Tercero Congreso de Historia Ferroviaria, Gijón, 2003, 4). Peasants from the Montaña de Burgos would not have earned more than 1 peseta per day at the time (see Ricardo Robledo Hernández, "Crisis agraria y éxodo rural: la emigración española a Ultramar (1880-1920)," in Ramón Garrabou (ed.) *La Crisis agraria europea de finales del siglo XIX*, Barcelona: Crítica, 1988, 212–44).

⁷⁷ See below, point 2, "The import-export trade in child workers."

⁷⁸ Georges Photios Tapinos, *L'Économie des migrations internationales*, Paris: F.N.S.P., Armand Colin, 1974, 52.

⁷⁹ See chapter 4.

⁸⁰ Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016; Int. Piacitelli (No. 49), 6.07.2016. Maria Carmina Pirolli née Di Meo is said to have sewn gold coins in the hem of her daughter's dress when they came back to France after the First World War (Int. Parravano, No. 52, 28.10.2016).

⁸¹ Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 24.07.2018. For an example of a young glassworker at Legras carrying a bundle: APP, CB 92.5, 1909/665, 3.08.1909.

sight was newcomers carrying mattresses on their back.⁸² Music instruments, jewellery, and dogs could have been brought as well.⁸³ As for Barbe Sommer, she kept an engraving of the lost provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in her kitchen at No. 96. Whether her family had carried it along from her native region or had bought it in Paris, it bore testimony as much to her sense of longing for her place of birth, as to the penetration of the State propaganda in the late 19th century.⁸⁴

On their way out, residents did not carry much either. Families who left in a hurry in August 1914 seem to have left most, if not all, of the small furniture they had managed to acquire over time.⁸⁵ Things were different for the glassware from Legras: it was kept in families and often passed on for generations. From an early date, many glassworkers bought such items at a discount, or more frequently still, stole them from the factory.⁸⁶ For his part, Luigi Pirollo would keep a personal creation with a strong symbolic function. He probably blew and carved that glass object at Legras in 1931, when he was awarded a State medal for his 30-year presence at the glassworks.⁸⁷ As colleagues of his had been using, for instance, little gold flakes to make lavish bowls or vases, he went for something different. He chose to insert into a glass cone little

⁸² Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 24.07.2018.

⁸³ On music instruments: a coalman from Aveyron may have brought a trumpet and taught his son how to play it: see SDMA H 27, 1893, and AVP, D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1687, Jules Célestin Long, av. de Paris 100 (on his father's origin, AD93, 1E66/189, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1884, No. 524, 12.04.1884). On jewellery: APP, CB 92.3, 1907/409, 26.03.1907. On dogs: AD93, 4U7/479, 15.01.1892, Plomb c. Walter, av. de Paris 96, 26.10.1891; APP, CB 92.2, 1905/891, 10.09.1905; CB 92.3, 1907/476, 6.04.1907; AD93, 4U7/1031, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Procès-verbal c. Léon Thiébaud, av. de Paris 96, 15.06.1909; APP, CB 92.13, 1916/1064, 29.11.1916; JSD, 25.03.1917; APP, CB 92.17, 1921/340, 4.05.1921.

⁸⁴ Int. Besson, No. 27, 24.07.2016.

⁸⁵ AD93, 4U7/723, 27.10.1916, Veuve Gréco c. Lutel; 4U7/735, 1920 (1), 6.02.1920, Damata ("Damoto") c. Veuve Barillier, and Pirollo c. Veuve Barillier; 4U7/736, 9.04.1920, Damata ("Damoto") c. Veuve Barillier, and Pirollo c. Veuve Barillier.

⁸⁶ See APP, CB 92.4, 1908/969, 21.12.1908; CB 92.6, 1910/379, 16.04.1910; CB 92.24, 1927/907, 21.04.1927-6.05.1927. It is hard to know whether these objects were saved for their monetary value, their aesthetic appeal, or because they were viewed as symbols of the glassmakers' skill. A resident at No. 102, arrested as she had just stolen a carafe from the factory, said she had taken it "*pour son originalité*" (APP, CB 92.22, 1926/121, 21.01.1926 – "because of its originality").

⁸⁷ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis Pirollo.

stones painted in bright colours— stones which came from Demanio.⁸⁸ This little bit of Southern Apennines incorporated within a piece of glass attests to the complexity of Louis's identifications after three decades in the Plaine.



*Figure 1: Luigi Pirolli's own creation,
a glass cone with little coloured stones from Demanio [before 1932]⁸⁹*

Beyond the logistics of the trips themselves, two other aspects are crucial to assess the residents' respective positions on the identification spectrum: their immediate provenance and destinations on the one hand, and their larger migration itineraries on the other. The former, accessible through certain documents –in particular military records, naturalisation files, and judicial archives– is represented in the following graphs.

⁸⁸ Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016.

⁸⁹ Louis Pirolli left Saint-Denis glassworks in 1932 (FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27).

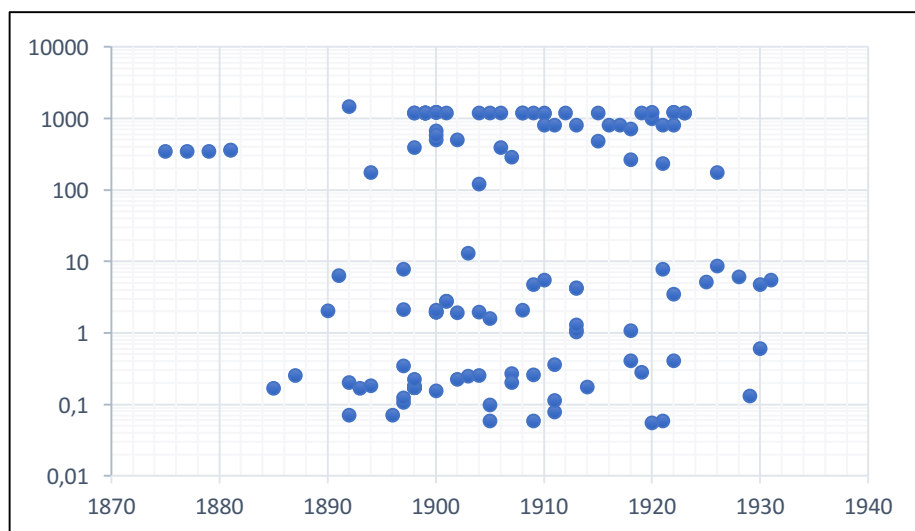


Figure 2: Distance between the cités and the residents' previous address (km)⁹⁰

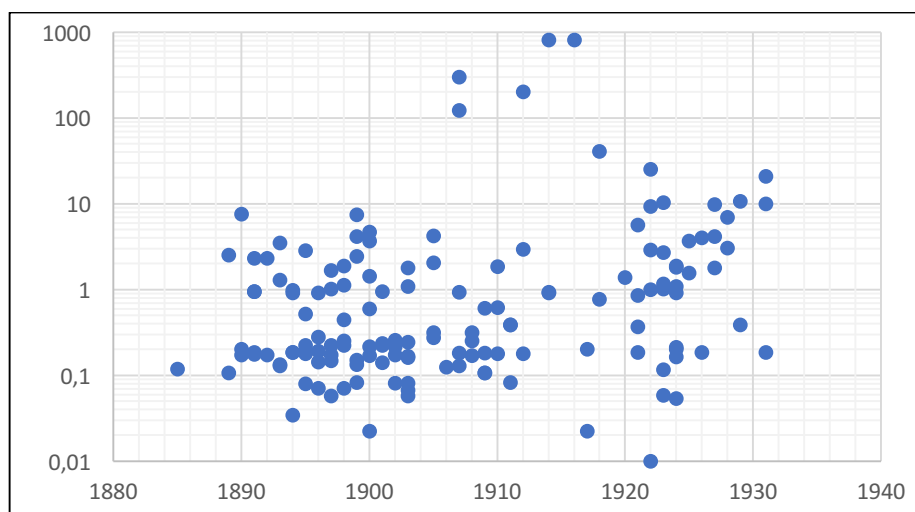


Figure 3: Distance between the cités and the residents' next address (km)

⁹⁰ These two graphs are based on cases in which we can know with accuracy, respectively, the residents' address immediately before (125 instances) or immediately after (147 instances) their stay in the cités. The data and the source for each instance is available at paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Residents moving in and out."

These graphs highlight, first, that the cités served, at various moments in time, as an immigration gateway. In early years, some Alsatians and Lorrainers settled directly in the buildings, as shown by the four dots at 300 km around 1880. Thereafter, the distribution of the data reveals that people mostly came from nearby locations, either other addresses in the Plaine or nearby suburbs.⁹¹ It was not until around 1900 that people started coming straight to the cités from far away again, whether their birthplaces or French cities where they had been living for a while. On the way out, destinations remained constant throughout the period. The overwhelming majority left the cités for another address in Saint-Denis, Paris, or another banlieue, and returns or long-distance re-emigration directly from the cités remained extremely rare, except during the Great War.

The reconstruction of residents' larger itineraries, based on the same sources with the addition of children's birthplaces as identified in censuses, points to another side of the story. Many Alsatian and Lorrainer residents, who often hailed from glass-working towns to begin with, had spent months or years in other glassmaking centres further west: Épernay,⁹² Bayel,⁹³ Vannes-le-Châtel,⁹⁴ Portieux,⁹⁵ Croismare,⁹⁶

⁹¹ In 1898, the arrival of the very first Italian residents, among whom Luigi's future wife Maria, had no visible impact on the graph, as they moved into No. 100 from another, overcrowded building across the street, which had to be evacuated due to its perilous conditions. See AD93, 4U7/966, Procès-verbaux c. Carlesimo, Voza, 18.11.1897; AD93, 4U7/972, Procès-verbal c. Adeline Polinier, 13.07.1898 (Jean Covelli); Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, audition of Mathias Rodi, 16.08.1901, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction No. 49750, 27.08.1901; M. Guillemin, 5.10.1901, "Faux et usage de faux, contravention à la loi du 2.11.1892," c. Gallaccio and others.

⁹² AD93, 1E66/320, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1910, Vol. 1, No. 269, 7.05.1910, Émile Théodule Détante, born Dizy-Magenta; AD51, 2E236/12, Magenta, 1896, births, No. 50, 03.08.1896, Alphonse Désiré Mohr; FNA, BB/11/3735, 6006 x 99, Émilie Schwartz née Mohr; SDMA, E 281, marriages, 1894, No. 486, 29.12.1894; SDMA, E 281, marriages, 1894, No. 486, 29.12.1894, Joseph Paul Carabin; FNA BB114456, 1564 x 06, Philippe and Marie Berthe Steinmann. The Épernay area had two glass factories from 1872 and 1875 until the 1880s (see Pierre Michel, *Épernay pas à pas: ses rues, ses places, son champagne*, Roanne: Horvath, 1993, 1st ed. 1984, 176).

⁹³ AD10, 4E03510, Bayel, 1861-1889, 1878, No. 30, 7.07.1878, Louise Vinckler. On the Bayel factory, see Gracia Dorel-Ferré, Denis McKee (eds.), *Les Patrons du Second Empire*, vol. 8: Champagne-Ardenne, Paris: Picard, 2006, 103.

⁹⁴ FNA, BB/11/2166, 7779 x 88, Augustin Austett.

⁹⁵ AVP, D4R1 829, 1895, No. 2237, François Sommer.

⁹⁶ AVP, D4R1 1058, 1900, No. 1710, Xavier Eugène Muller; SDMA, H 28, Joseph Winckler.

Montferrand⁹⁷ –to name only a few.⁹⁸ Some southern Italian residents had also worked in the industry before, mostly in the Lyons area and to a lesser extent in Marseilles, where the glass barons had been pioneers in hiring Italian manpower in the 1890s.⁹⁹ Itineraries of *padroni** look like an address book of the glass industry.¹⁰⁰

Many other residents, who were not glassworkers, had migrated elsewhere before. The map of iron-casting and mining towns overlapped with some of the residents' trajectories.¹⁰¹ For farmers and agricultural laborers, it was not uncommon to have made a halt in the largest neighbouring town to their place of origin.¹⁰² The single most popular stop was the city of Paris itself.¹⁰³ All movements were not linear, far from it. A family of residents from Belgian Flanders had moved to Somme, Nord, Aisne,

⁹⁷ FNA, BB/11/3743, 6860 x 97, Charles Messmer. A glass factory was founded in Montferrand (Doubs) in 1859. See Michel Chevalier, *Tableau Industriel de la Franche-Comté (1960-1961)*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1961, 81.

⁹⁸ Not to mention other suburbs of Paris where glassworks had popped up in the second half of the 19th century. For example, a resident had first worked at Sauvageot in Saint-Ouen: FNA, BB/11/2339, 11421 x 89, Laurent Kuntz.

⁹⁹ For the Lyon area, see AVP, D4R1 1202, 1903, No. 4365, Valentin Canale; FNA, BB/11/8316, 21026 x 24, Joseph Tari; the Castaldis, whose daughter Amélie born in Rive-de-Gier (AD93, D2 M891, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 102 Av. Wilson); for Marseilles, FNA, BB/11/8141, 12218 x 23, Francesco Rinaldi; BB/11/9695, 27752 x 26, Roch-Archange Patriarca.

¹⁰⁰ See the mentions of Oullins, Givors, Souvigny, Pantin, Clichy, Choisy-le-Roi in FNA, BB/11/11506, 89650 x 28, Loreto di Benedetto and BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Joseph Carlesimo.

¹⁰¹ For a previous sojourn of residents in Montataire: AD93, 1E66/373, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1913, No. 1220, 20.10.1913, Alphonse Van de Pontseele; 1E66/384, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, deaths - 1919, vol. 2, No. 1454: 18.10.1919, Constantin Van de Pontseele. In Le Creusot: SDMA, 1R20, La Plaine primary school register, boys, 1885-1886, Lordet Henri. In Châtillon-sur-Seine: SDMA 1F19, 1891 census, vol. 2, 100 Av. de Paris, Michel family, and AD21, TD, 1883-1892, Châtillon-sur-Seine, 29.08.1886, Jules Michel. In Montceau-les-Mines: SDMA, E 260, marriages, 1889, No. 203, 13.07.1889, Antoinette Devaux.

¹⁰² See, for Brittany, the Dugué family, resident at No. 100 in 1896, who first moved to Pontivy: AD Morbihan, Noyal-Pontivy, marriages, 1875, No. 9, 21.01.1875 (a case which runs counter to what Jean-Paul Brunet affirmed in "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 134: "*L'immigration bretonne [à Saint-Denis], immigration de groupes, s'opère sans étapes intermédiaires, ni dans les bourgs et villes de Bretagne, ni à Paris*"). For Extremadura, see the Matéos, from Serrejón and Peraleda, residents at No. 100 from the mid-1910s, who had first migrated to Naval Moral de la Mata (see AD93 D2 M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census), or the Rodríguez, from Cumbre and Belvis de Montroy, who settled in Saucedilla before heading to France and moving in at No. 96 in 1915 (FNA, 19770877/124, 1151 x 33).

¹⁰³ Based only on census information (included those for which we retrieved the origins from other sources), families of residents whose parents were not from Paris themselves, but who had had at least a child in Paris were: 7 in 1886; 9 in 1891; 5 in 1896; 3 in 1901; 7 in 1911; 10 in 1921; 6 in 1926; 9 in 1931.

Marne, and again to Somme, before making their way to the Plaine.¹⁰⁴ A couple from the Burgos province had spent a while in San Sebastián in 1912 before coming to Saint-Denis.¹⁰⁵ A man from Extremadura who spent the Great War at No. 96 had first migrated to Santander.¹⁰⁶

Migrations triggered by the Great War would be no exception to this pattern of multi-stop migrations, albeit for particular reasons. Many refugees from the occupied districts and Belgium had migrated further south before coming to the Plaine. Four families of refugees at Nos. 96-102 had first settled in Lot, the Pyrénées, Angers, and Châteaurenault, near Tours.¹⁰⁷ And this makes no mention of military service, which across Europe from the 1870s had brought droves of male residents far from home, hopping between garrison towns. To give a sense of the complexity of the movements, the following map tracks the itineraries of five neighbours who lived simultaneously in the cités in the late 1920s.

*Figure 4 (next page): Itineraries of five residents
before they lived in the cités in the late 1920s*

¹⁰⁴ Compare AD93, 1E66/397, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1925, vol. 2, No. 1366, 25.10.1925, Alfred Vertenten ("Vertente"); AVP, D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1629, Louis Vertenten; SDMA, E 298, marriages, 1897, No. 92, 20.03.1897, marriage of Adèle Hortense Vertenten; AD Somme, 2E71/22, Beauval, deaths 1887-1893, 1890, No. 83, 4.11.1890, Louis Vertenten ("Verteinquin").

¹⁰⁵ AD93, D2M8 91, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 100 av. Wilson, Joseph and Rita Castaño.

¹⁰⁶ FNA, 19770897/20, 33885 x 38, Maximo López.

¹⁰⁷ See AD93, D7 42-49, Ville de Saint-Denis, Questionnaire, Service des réfugiés, familles Fleury, 31.08.1916, Malderez, 23.05.1918, Horgnies, 18.03.1919, Naillon, 4.08.1919. Another one, from the Pas-de-Calais, arrived at No. 100 from Evian, where the father was released by the German Army at the end of the conflict (AD93, D7 49, Sauvage, 14.10.1919). For an estimation of the number of refugees who had come to Saint-Denis after at least a first stay in another département, see André Savoye, "La vie quotidienne dans la banlieue Nord...", *op. cit.*, 104.

Some of the the most common patterns are visible on this map: military service which could lead to distant shores (Moret);¹⁰⁸ round-trips (Sánchez, Di Meo); multiple stays in the cités years apart (Sánchez); shortlived migration projects in other countries (Di Meo); widows migrating on their own (Di Meo to Paris); rapid address changes to follow job opportunities, whether on long (Greco, De Carli) or shorter (Moret) distances.

While in the cités, residents could move from one address to the next, or even from one house or one floor to another at the same address. The precious notes from land register inspectors in the 1880s and 1890s provide a glimpse of these internal movements, which would be otherwise invisible.¹⁰⁹ Those mobilities could be related to deaths, weddings, disabilities that made it impossible to keep living in the upper floors, or simply the demolition of one's house.¹¹⁰ And one could also live in the same apartment years apart.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Note that there is no movement associated to the military service of the other men involved because De Carli, Sánchez and Greco had all been exempted.

¹⁰⁹ This source requires a little bit of deciphering though, since the names of residents were routinely crossed out and even erased with a rubber in order to put in the identity of new tenants.

¹¹⁰ For a female resident moving from No. 100 to No. 98 to move in with her new husband, see the example of Marie Mapps née Isz (AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.*; SDMA E269, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1891, No. 118, 11.04.1891; E 271, Saint-Denis, births, 1892, No. 627, 30.05.1892). For a widow changing house after the deaths of her husband, see Peltier ("Pelletier") in AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.* and SDMA, E299, deaths, 1897, No. 493, 7.06.1897. For a resident leaving his apartment on the first floor at No. 96 and moving into No. 102 after his legs became paralyzed, see the case of Laurent Louis Sauvage (AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.*; SDMA, 1F19, 1891 census; SDMA, 1I12, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to Mr. Coeuille, police chief, 10.12.1895). The demolition of their house is what prompted four households to move in 1893 from the house marked with an N to the one marked with a C on the figure (AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.*, "maison N").

¹¹¹ This was the case of Florent and Madeleine Fixari, who lived in a lodging on the first floor of a house at the back of No. 102 in 1888-1889, and then again from 1891 to 1895. (AD93, D4P4 57, *doc. cit.*; FNA, BB/11/1981, 2472 x 87, Fixari).

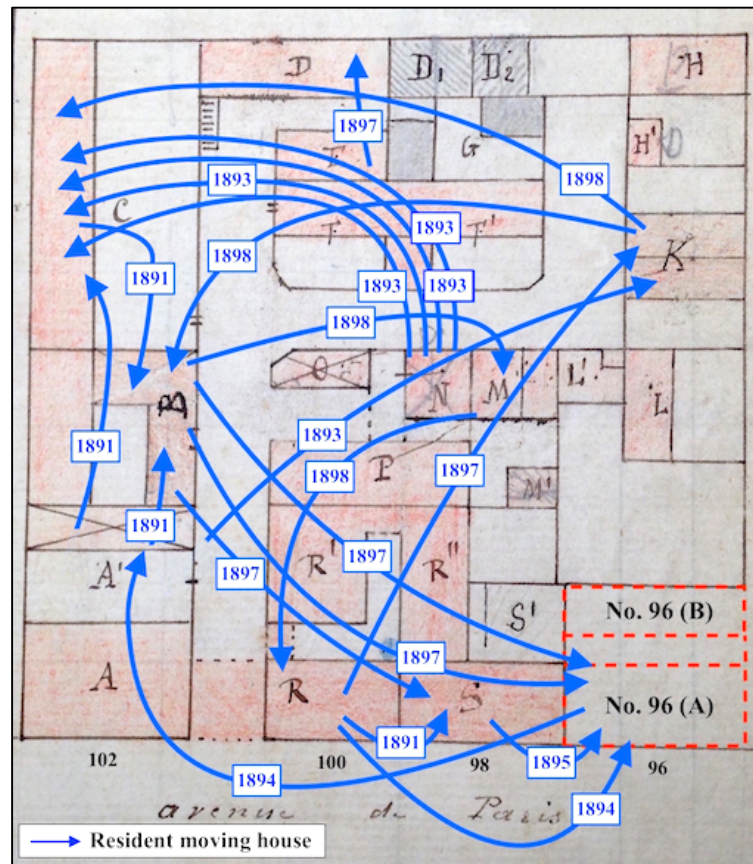


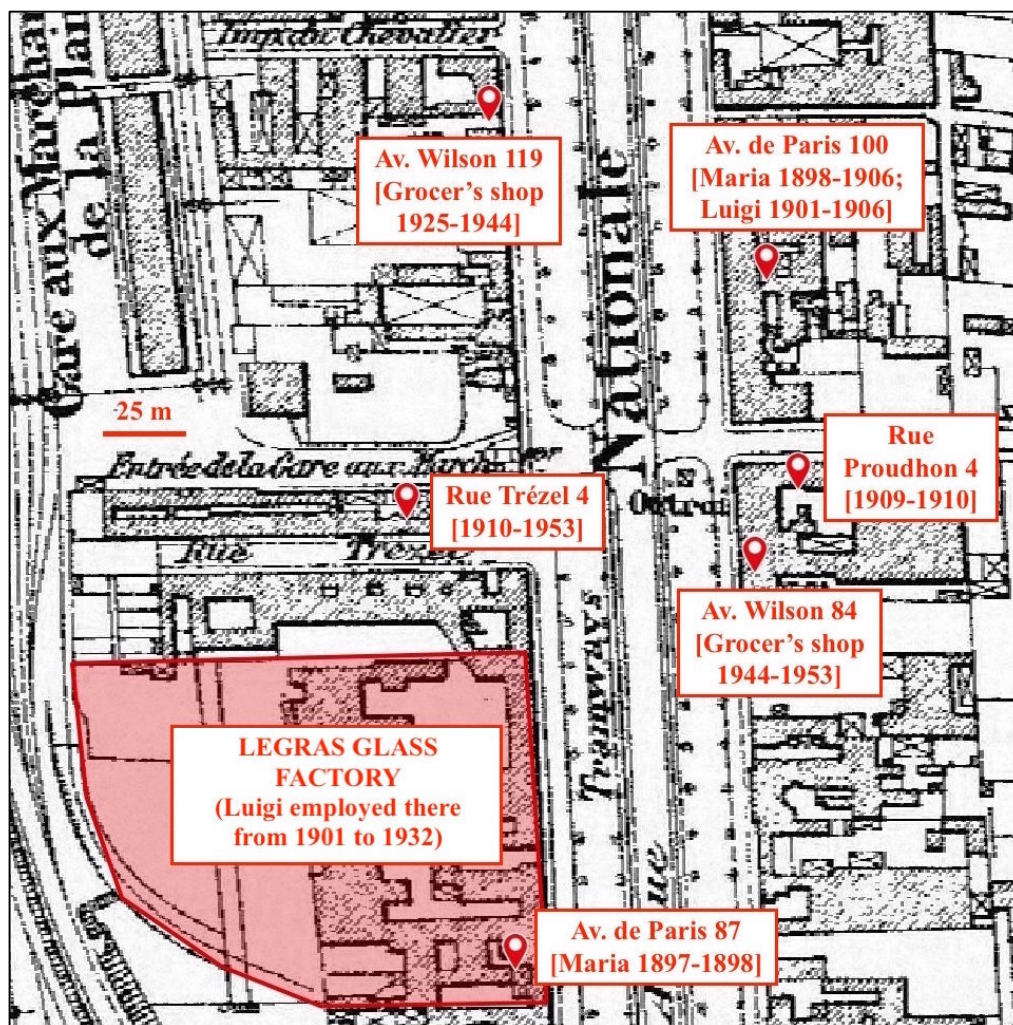
Figure 5: Internal movements in the cités, 1891-1898

When it came to leaving the cités, it seems that the scale of the movement went up with the standards of living. For most residents, their first move happened towards similar apartment units nearby, where they could find a lower price, more hygiene, an extra room or simply a place of their own after their wedding –like Luigi and Maria Pirolli.¹¹² The median distance, across our period, between the cités and the next address of residents is under 300 meters.¹¹³

¹¹² See SDMA, 1F27, 1911 Census, 4 imp. Trézel and 4 rue Proudhon (Luigi and Maria are listed at both addresses); AD93, 1E66/274, Saint-Denis, births, 1914, vol. 2, No. 836, 29.06.1914, Albert Pirolli.

¹¹³ Based on the same data as figure 3.

Luigi and Maria Pirolli's mobility in the Plaine over five decades shows not only the small radius of their residential geography, but also the deep-rootedness of their settlement in the neighbourhood. It resisted various interruptions: Luigi's military service in Italy during which Maria also went back to Pozzilli (1906-1909); their first return to Italy in the summer of 1914 (1914-1915); and the period of Luigi's service in Great War (1915-1919).¹¹⁴



*Figure 6: Luigi and Maria Pirolli's dwellings
in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, 1897-1953*

¹¹⁴ Maria Pirolli née Rodi died on 15.06.1948, and Louis on 3.03.1953.

Address changes could at once result from, and accelerate social and cultural transitions. In 1906, as Luigi Pirolli made his way back to Italy to join his battalion, his father Giacinto and his brother Giustino came along with him. Only in October 1907 would they return to the Plaine-Saint-Denis, this time with the entire family except Luigi.¹¹⁵ This extra manpower was certainly not useless, especially in Luigi's absence. Giacinto was still not earning much at the time, only 4 francs a day, for eleven hours of work after seven years of service at Legras's, and Giustino less than 3 francs.¹¹⁶

This time, the family had moved to a less miserable apartment around the corner. Surely, the children did not each have a bed, except for the little sister Emelia, a consequence of the common gender boundaries of the time. But Giacinto made sure his sons have different shifts at the factory, which allowed them to take turns in their beds.¹¹⁷ The new address was a much smaller building: there lived only three families, the Pirollis' neighbours coming from the Loire Valley and Lorraine. As close as it was to No. 100, they were now the only Italian family in the entire street. The Pirollis were starting to blend in.¹¹⁸

When Luigi and Maria moved to a nearby street, it was once again a movement that echoed evolutions in their lives. As Maria had become pregnant for the second time in the spring of 1910, they had decided to get married. At the same period, Luigi's

¹¹⁵ FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino Pirolli; Préfecture de Police, Extrait du registre d'immatriculation, No. 4967, feuillet 67, Pirolli Emelia, private collection of M. and Mme Parravano (Int. Parravano, No. 52, 28.10.2016).

¹¹⁶ A meal for one person at a local bar would cost over 1 franc. The rent, between 200 and 300 francs a year, was comparatively more affordable than food or clothing. See Pierre de Peretti, *Saint-Denis 1870/1920, Les témoins parlent*, Saint-Denis: Archives municipales de Saint-Denis, 1981, 5; SDMA, CT541, Enquête statistique, 1913.

¹¹⁷ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016. On the workers' mentality in that regard, see Alain Faure, "Comment se logeait le peuple parisien à la Belle Époque," *Vingtième siècle*, No. 64 (Oct.-Dec. 1999), 41–51.

¹¹⁸ SDMA, 1F27, Saint-Denis Census, 1911, vol. 1, 340–2, 4 rue Proudhon.

position at the factory was improving significantly: he was now a glass-carver. He and Giustino seem to have been among the very first non-French nationals to reach these more enviable positions, which thus far had been the preserve of skilled French workers, in particular Alsatians and Lorrainers.¹¹⁹ Living in a comparably smaller and better maintained house was also a way for Luigi and Maria to make these symbolic and material changes more tangible.

In general, the situation of former residents improved over time. Tenants went on to own their furniture, and a significant proportion ended up buying their own property, albeit initially limited in size and value.¹²⁰ For the oldest families of Alsatians and Lorrainers, their first property could be located in the Plaine; Luigi and Maria's landlord from 1911 was exactly in that case. In the interwar period, plots in semi-rural areas further north with unsophisticated wooden constructions had the residents' preference.¹²¹

Speaking of itineraries would not be complete without mentioning secondary journeys and return trips. With regard to the former, we know that Maria Pirolli's father and oldest brothers spent at least two consecutive summers in Normandy to play music, each time making their way back to the cités.¹²² They would be emulated by other Spanish residents a few years later, who also went to Normandy to sell biscuits or work as forestry workers.¹²³ Migrations of glassworkers could be temporary as well:

¹¹⁹ See AD93, 1E66/326, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1913, Vol. 1, No. 411, 5.07.1913. In the 1891 (26 out of 57) and 1896 (16 out of 32) censuses, Alsatians and Lorainers made up the biggest regional fraction of glass and crystal-carvers in the Plaine. In 1901 and 1911 probably as well, but by that time almost all of them were indistinctly referred to as “*verriers*” (see SDMA, 1F19, 1F21, 1F22, 1F24, 1F27). Such positions did not mean job security though, since Luigi remained a *journalier* his entire career at Legras's. Even managers could be liable to, and afraid of, losing their position overnight (see APP, CB 92.30, 1933/2780, 22.11.1933).

¹²⁰ See FNA, BB/11/10700, 49272 x 28, Leo; Int. Leo (No. 21), 1.08.2016.

¹²¹ Int. Luengo (No. 40), 21.08.2016. See Annie Fourcaut, *La Banlieue en morceaux. La crise des lotissements défectueux en France dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Paris: Créaphis, 2000.

¹²² AD76 4M739, Le Havre, “État nominatif des étrangers italiens,” No. 1836; Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, audition of Mathias Rodi, 16.08.1901, *doc. cit.*

¹²³ On the Spaniards selling biscuits, see below, point 2. FNA, BB/11/7650, 13980 x 21, Marcel Saíz; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2016. Ceferino Peña and Luisa Gomez, who were already living at

having moved from the cités to Choisy-le-Roi where he remained for a few years, an Italian glass maker eventually headed back to No. 100, where his family had stayed.¹²⁴

Trips home were even more common, and of greater significance for people's transnational ties and socio-cultural identifications. These movements are important to measure the attachment of migrants to their native region, which is not necessarily synonymous with a national sentiment.¹²⁵ And yet few are the studies that document in detail the frequency, scope and factors behind these movements, which are critical to build new, connected histories of migration.

Such trips were not as rare as some historians have claimed.¹²⁶ They could be short, and made for various purposes.¹²⁷ Luigi's father and uncles regularly returned to

No. 96 in 1915, also went for a few months to Normandy, where their daughter Engracia was born in March 1918 (see AD93, 1E66/275, Saint-Denis, births, 1915, vol. 1, No. 425, 14.04.1915; APP, CB 92.18.1921/1173, 15.12.1921-21.12.1921).

¹²⁴ His name was Alessandro Fallone and her wife's, Cristina Pirollo. See AD93 1E66/370, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1910, No. 852, 3.08.1910; SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 100 Av. de Paris. Alessandro could still episodically come to Saint-Denis from Choisy: see AD93, 1E66/315, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1907, Vol. 2, No. 482: 14.09.1907. The presence of family was not necessary for people to make a comeback. When a Burgales arrived in the Plaine in the 1920s for the second time, he was on his own, and there is no indication that direct relatives of his were still living there. And yet he must have kept some form of contacts from the first time he had been living at No. 100 before the war, back when he was a child worker at Legras's under the watch of a *padrón**. (see AVP, D2U8 390, Cour d'assises de la Seine, dossier d'instruction c. Lopez Rufo, ruling of 4.01.1935).

¹²⁵ As Nancy L. Green and Roger Waldinger put it, "the 'home' to which the migrants prove attached is as likely—if not more so—to involve the village, region, or even ethnic minority of origin, as opposed to the sending state or the imagined nation to whom that state is presumed to belong. And for that reason, local memories of the place left behind may be more salient to the migrant than patriotic or sentimental attachments to the abstract entity of the nation never personally experienced." (Nancy L. Green, Roger Waldinger, "Introduction," in *Id.* (eds.), *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and Their Homeland Connections*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 2016, 11–2). See also Mark Wyman, *Round-trip to America...*, *op. cit.*; Donna R. Gabaccia, Fraser M. Ottanelli (eds.), *Italian Workers of the World: Labour Migration and the Formation of Multiethnic States*, Urbana, Chicago (IL): University of Illinois Press, 2001, 2.

¹²⁶ Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, "Les Italiens à Paris au XIX^e siècle," *Studi Emigrazione*, Vol. 35 (1998), No. 130, 229.

¹²⁷ For a typology of return motives from a sociological standpoint, see Rosemarie Rogers, "Return Migration, in Comparative Perspective," in Daniel Kubat (ed.), *The Politics of Return. International Return Migration in Europe*, New York (NY): Center for Migration Studies, 1984, 277–99.

Pozzilli, especially in the years when their wives still lived there.¹²⁸ Going home was generally expensive: less because of transport than for the need to impress other families and distribute lavish gifts around, while receiving no income during the whole length of the trip.¹²⁹ Which is probably why some residents, like one family from Extremadura, went back to their village only rarely; when they did, it was for an important family occasion, namely a wedding.¹³⁰ The passport of another resident from Alsace also suggests a stand-alone visit back home.¹³¹ While some just left briefly to abscond,¹³² others returned more frequently and for longer periods. An Italian teenager, arrived at No. 96 in 1912, went back to his hometown in 1913, came back to No. 96 in 1915, went home again in 1917 and came back to his Plaine address in 1919.¹³³

Back and forth mobilities could be frequent even across the Franco-German border. A glassworker from Lorraine left the cités in the summer of 1882, went to German Mosel to get married in August, stayed there for a few months and was back at No. 100 by the beginning of 1884.¹³⁴ One of his neighbours from Alsace had arrived with his parents in the Plaine-Saint-Denis in the Summer of 1877. In 1888, he and his parents were back in their native village, where he got married. In 1891, he and his wife, just like his brother, were back in the Plaine again, in the cités, while his parents

¹²⁸ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016, Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016. Until the final years of his life Luigi himself paid visits to relatives in the village.

¹²⁹ Jean Lemoine, "L'émigration bretonne à Paris," *art. cit.*, 177–8.

¹³⁰ Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en banlieue rouge...", *op. cit.*, 708–9. Others never returned home for decades, like Erminia Fella, a resident at No. 100 who left Acquafondata around 1918 and only went back to visit in 1984 (Int. Gallaccio, No. 57, 22.11.2016), or Juan and Jacoba Gímenes (from No. 96), who always remained in the Plaine even during the Great War (Int. Aksouh, No. 33, 30.09.2016).

¹³¹ Préfecture de police, "Passeport à l'étranger valable un an – pour l'Allemagne," passport of Anselme Isz, 100 Av. de Paris, 20.04.1894, private collection of Mme Lacy (Int. Lacy, No. 1, 27.01.2017).

¹³² One resident wanted for attempted murder in the Plaine-Saint-Denis fled to Italy, only to come back a few weeks later just to fire gunshots at the same man once again. AD93, 4U7/690, 2.06.1911, Toussaint c. Gabrielli; APP, CB 92.7, 1911/221, 3.08.1911.

¹³³ FNA, 19770896/57, 24259 x 38, Domenico Antonio Caporuscio.

¹³⁴ SDMA, 1F15, 1881 Census, 49 (sic) Av. de Paris, p. 38, Pierre Carabin; AD93, 1E66/142, Saint-Denis, births, 1882, No. 833, 28.07.1882; MA Soucht, marriages, 1882, 21.08.1882; births, 1883, No. 34, 21.05.1883; AD93, 1E66/149, Saint-Denis, births, 1884, No. 88, 22.01.1884; 1E66/152, Saint-Denis, births, 1885, No. 888, 24.07.1885; SDMA, E246, Saint-Denis, births, 1886, No. 114, 25.01.1886; SDMA, 1F17, 1886 census, vol. 2, 98 Av. de Paris.

and other siblings were living at No. 133, across the Avenue. In the mid-1890s, his parents were again present in Alsace, and in 1901, they were once again in the Plaine, before going back one last time to their village where they died a few years later.¹³⁵

Military conscription was one of the most common reasons for return.¹³⁶ Not rare were Luigi Pirolli's male neighbours who combined military service and marriage in their village, before heading back to the Plaine.¹³⁷ Others, like one Spanish resident at No. 96, would go home to find a wife but married in Saint-Denis.¹³⁸ Interestingly, when he was called to accomplish his military service in Italy, Luigi and his family decided to make the trip with his pregnant lover Maria. She bore their child in Demanio and probably stayed there with the Pirollis, where her status of unmarried mother would have brought less trouble than in her own native village.¹³⁹

Upon his returns, Luigi was able to "assess the situation in the village, measure changes, and verify work opportunities."¹⁴⁰ Those never improved dramatically, and were not on a par with what the Plaine-Saint-Denis had to offer. Others could make a

¹³⁵ See AD93, 4U7/1024, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis-Sud, audition of Philippe Wernert, 25.08.1906; SDMA, 1F15, 1881 Census, Av. de Paris, No. 19 and 41 (sic); AD67, 4E413/10, Rosteig, 1888, marriages, No. 5, 8.10.1888, Philipp Wernert and Katharina Schneider; SDMA, 1F19, 1891 Census, 133 Av. de Paris; AD67, 4E413/10, Rosteig, 1892, marriages, 1.08.1892, Paul Staub and Maria Anna Werner; FNA, BB/11/1464, 2263 x 78, Christian Wernert and Marie Franck; FNA, BB/11/2397, 1265 x 90, Philippe Wernert; SDMA, E277, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1893, No. 320, 19.08.1893; AD67, 4E413/12, Rosteig, 1896, marriages, No. 9, 15.09.1896, Franz Werner and Magdalena Grussi; AD67, 4 E 413/12, Rosteig, 1901, marriages, No. 1, 11.02.1901, Georg Werner and Katharina Frank; AD67, Rosteig, 4 E 413/16, 1904, No. 8, 26.06.1904; AD93, 1E66/369, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1909, No. 54; AVP, D4R1 565, 1889, Military registries, No. 2847, Jacques Wernert; MA Aubervilliers, 1E184, births, 1898, 17.11.1898, Lucien Antoine Werner.

¹³⁶ On military service, see chapter 4.

¹³⁷ We came across at least eight cases of residents from Southern Italy who went home to marry between 1900 and 1915: see FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14; BB/11/10742, 51385 x 28; BB/11/10387, 33613 x 27; BB/11/13343, 26126 x 30; BB/11/10387 33613 x 27; BB/11/10371, 32806 x 27; BB/11/10700, 49272 x 28; BB/11/13376, 27779 x 30.

¹³⁸ AD93, 1E66/342, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1922 (Jan.-Jul.), 4.01.1922; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018.

¹³⁹ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27; Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.1916.

¹⁴⁰ Franco Rizzi, "Approche prosopographique de l'étude de l'émigration : départ et accueil," in Centre d'études et de documentation sur l'immigration italienne, *L'immigration italienne en France dans les années 20*, proceedings of a Franco-Italian symposium held in Paris 15-17.10.1987, Paris: Éditions du CEDEI, 1988, 146.

different evaluation, eventually leading to their homecoming. According to one Spanish worker from the Plaine in 1928, “*la vie est meilleure en Espagne, parce qu’on gagne davantage et que les produits de consommation sont moins chers.*”¹⁴¹

Men were by no means the only ones to go back and forth over borders. A former resident at No. 100, a Burgales woman, also made her way back to Spain with her husband and children in 1916. She then left her husband in the Merindades and came back to the Plaine the year after with her children.¹⁴² Other women went home to give birth, so as to take advantage of more extensive support systems.¹⁴³ Residents could also send home children they could not afford to keep with them, when they did not abandon them altogether.¹⁴⁴

Maria Pirolli’s parents made it back home in the late 1900s, just like other couples of older residents from other regions.¹⁴⁵ There are fewer traces of Alsatian and Lorrainer residents going back permanently to their native region.¹⁴⁶ But contrary to

¹⁴¹ Jacques Valdour, *Les Puissances de désordre...*, op. cit., 27.

¹⁴² FNA, BB/11/12124, 11018 x 29, Gabrielle Varona veuve López.

¹⁴³ FNA, BB/11/13343, 26126 x 30, Benedetto Tedeschi. Another couple, Baltasar and Victoriana Gómez, whom we shall come back to later in this chapter, took a trip home –in Northern Spain– in 1910 and also had a baby there, although the purpose of the trip was probably to recruit child workers for Legras (SDMA, E372, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1911, No. 948, 9.08.1911, Felipa Gómez).

¹⁴⁴ Estanislás González’s son Martín, born in Saint-Denis in 1917, was sent to his maternal grandmother in Spain after the passing of his mother, before coming back to the Plaine and No. 96 after Estanislás remarried in 1922 (Int. Gonzalez, No. 71, 24.07.2018). For the abandonment of a child from No. 98, see APP, CB 92.1, 1905/645, 29.06.1905. Symmetrically, some families in the cités took care of children whose parents could not afford to raise: for example Émile Bichler, 9, lived at his uncle and aunt’s at No. 96 in 1891, after his parents had left a few months before (see SDMA, E257, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1888, No. 364, 9.04.1888; 1F19, 1891 census, vol. 2, 96 av. de Paris).

¹⁴⁵ Maria’s parents went back in the late 1900s (compare AD93, 1E66/312, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1906, Vol. 1, No. 87, 19.02.1906, and AD93, 1E66/321, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1910, Vol. 2, No. 377, 25.06.1910). For another example of a couple who went back to their native Jura in the late 1910s, see Service des étrangers, Rallis née Guyonvernier Louise Émilie Joséphine, formulaire de renseignements du 22.05.1919 en vue de de la délivrance de la carte d’identité en application du décret du 2.04.1917, in APP, IA 171, No. 15173, Époux Rallis.

¹⁴⁶ We know of one who did after his wife had died. See FNA, BB/11/2561, 5782 x 91, Joseph Schiel and Madeleine Schiel née Bour; BB/11/4804, 5866 x 08, Pierre Schiel; SDMA, E291, deaths, 02.01.1895-31.12.1895, No. 23.

what almost all residents and former residents affirmed when applying to citizenship, very few abandoned every hope of return.¹⁴⁷

Once back, the status effect caused by a relatively successful Paris experience could be noticeable, provided returnees were “prepared” enough for that adjustment.¹⁴⁸ Maria’s father was elected to the municipal council in his hometown in 1913 and 1914.¹⁴⁹ As for Luigi’s uncle Agostino, he also apparently held an official position in Pozzilli, which earned him and his wife a high degree of deference in Demanio.¹⁵⁰ As for Luigi himself, the objectives were perhaps more ambivalent. He displayed resolve to succeed in France in the long term, while also intending to enhance his status through property acquisition in his native village.¹⁵¹ In the end, he and Maria never came back, due in large part to the destruction in 1944 of the house they had invested in.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ To the question “Has he lost every hope of return in his country of origin?,” the answer recorded by police officers in the naturalization forms filled for residents was almost always yes. The only exception we found was in a failed application, in which the form bears “*Il dit non*” (FNA, BB/11/4698, 9335 x 07, Adalgiso Carlesimo).

¹⁴⁸ On the notion of “preparedness,” see Jean-Pierre Cassarino, “Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited,” *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, Vol. 6 (2004), No. 2, 253–79. This should not obliterate the fact, however, that for other residents, their stay in France had been so short that the episode barely changed anything at home, and rapidly faded away even in their own family’s memory (Int. Porres, No. 55, 30.09.2016; Int. McAvoy, No. 72, 25.02.2018).

¹⁴⁹ AS Frosinone, Fondo Prefettura, Acquafondata, Bilanci di Previsione, B. 1-2, 3.02.1913, 26.01.1914, Mattia Rodi.

¹⁵⁰ Int. Vitale (No. 7), 17.01.2017; Int. Andaloro (No. 8), 28.01.2017. Their temporary journeys to France seem to have closely corresponded to a broader migration pattern whose core objective was “to improve life at home through earning enough to achieve a higher status or more solid position in the village (Mark Wyman, *op. cit.*, 193). This runs counter to some anthropological findings for later periods; see in particular George Gmelch, “Return Migration,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 9 (1980), 142–6.

¹⁵¹ Luigi may have been aware, in that regard, that in the event he would decide to go back permanently with Maria upon their retirement, they would have been able to receive whatever pensions they had contributed to in France. By virtue of Art. 14 of the law of 20.07.1886 and the Franco-Italian treaty signed in Rome on 15.04.1904. See Nissim Samama, *Questioni riguardanti la condizione giuridica degli Italiani all'estero (Francia)*, from the proceedings of the 2nd *Congresso degli Italiani all'estero* held in Rome in June 1911, Florence: Enrico Arian, 1911, 119–20.

¹⁵² Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016.



*Figure 7: The house built by Louis Pirolli in Pozzilli,
before and after the Second World War*

All these movements point to considerable differences in the ways residents must have experienced their changes of setting, settled in the Plaine, and kept ties with their village. Was it just another stop of an itinerant life, or the first place away from home ever? Another French-speaking, industrial town with plenty of migrant workers like others seen before; or an awe-inspiring cityscape with objects, people and sensations totally foreign compared to the village left just days earlier? And what exactly did keeping ties mean, when one's immediate family members had all migrated somewhere else? The first educated guess, on account of all the different cases that survive in the sources, is that family and personal histories mattered a lot. The stage people found themselves at, in their collective or individual history of migration, is likely to have considerably influenced their relation to ethnicity, working conditions, and gender roles. Scattered examples unsurprisingly suggest that the higher the position in the migration chain, the more able people became to cross their original group boundaries. And yet, new migrants whose relatives had been in France for years had already been exposed, back in their village, to cultural changes probably more sweeping than we think.¹⁵³ In any case, all of these adjustments very much depended on people's connections to each other, which enabled them to migrate in the first place.

¹⁵³ See Peggy Levitt, "Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 32 (1998), No. 4, 926–48.

Migration networks

The residents' migration networks, when they existed, could be based on family ties, connections in the village or region of origin –and more often than not, a combination of both. Few seem to have come entirely independently, and almost all had recommendations or at least points of contact in the area, thereby taking part in chain migrations.¹⁵⁴ Key characters who facilitated migration and integration could be of various sorts. Some were mostly providing help to their relatives and acquaintances from their micro-region; others operated on a wider basis, enacting a solidarity that at once proceeded from, and produced, ethnicisation at a larger scale.

It is one thing to conjecture the existence of those networks;¹⁵⁵ another to actually try and map them. The case of the Pirollis and their relationship to the neighbourhood of La Villette provides a first, concrete example of the interlocking of micro-regional and family networks. By the late 19th century, this northeastern district of Paris had a high density of Casertani and Molisani.¹⁵⁶ Rosario Verrecchia, a first cousin of Luigi Pirolli's mother who would later live at No. 100, had settled in La Villette as early as the late 1870s or early 1880s, when he had taken a job at the Northern railway company.¹⁵⁷ Other families from that same region, whose members would remain at No. 100 for years, would also live in La Villette upon their arrival in France, including

¹⁵⁴ See Rudolph J. Vecoli, "Introduction," in *Id.*, Suzanne Sinke (eds.), *A Century of European Migrations, 1830–1930*, Urbana, Chicago (IL): University of Illinois Press, 1991, 11: "Chain migration... implies that networks, based on kin and kith, of information, mutual help, and emotional and material resources provided guidance and sustenance to those undertaking the trip. Such networks determined timing and destinations, promised lodgings and jobs, and insured social integration into a community."

¹⁵⁵ See e.g. Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge' ...," *op. cit.*, 99.

¹⁵⁶ And not of Italians in general, as some scholars have too quickly concluded. See Laurent Couder, "Les Italiens dans la région parisienne," in *Publications de l'École Française de Rome*, No. 94 (1986), 501–46.

¹⁵⁷ AVP, V4E 3106, Paris, Ve arr., 1882, marriages, No. 15, 7.01.1882; Saint-Denis Municipal Archives (SDMA), 1F21, Census, 1896, vol. II, 171. Rosario's mother, Concetta Verrecchia née di Meo (Filignano, 23.01.1821–13.09.1911), was the aunt of Luigi's mother, Maria Carmina Pirolli née Di Meo, on her father's side. See in particular ASC Filignano, 1843, marriages, 7.08.1843, Carmine Antonio Verrecchia di Giuseppe and Concetta Di Meo di Antonino.

the family of Luigi's future wife Maria.¹⁵⁸ In the area's overcrowded streets, where some experienced life in slum-like cités for the first time,¹⁵⁹ immigrants could find a place to dwell where their dialect could be understood and job opportunities heard about. Rosario Verrecchia himself had made enough money to buy out a small, two-room hotel-restaurant in the heart of the neighbourhood.¹⁶⁰ In many ways, the Plaine-Saint-Denis was at first, for southern Italians, a periphery of La Villette, and some started working at Legras while staying in that north-eastern area of Paris.¹⁶¹

Rosario, Luigi's relative, was one of the first to settle in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, with his family, in 1896. At that date, very few Italians had been living in the particular perimeter around the glass factory, and only one came from Molise or Terra di Lavoro.¹⁶² This single Molisan family, though, that of Luigi Salvatore, had been there for a while. Rosario's own brother-in-law, Salvatore had moved to the Plaine with wife and children as early as 1893.¹⁶³ For their part, after an injury had forced him to quit

¹⁵⁸ On the Carbones, see FNA, BB/11/13261, 22005 x 30, Antonio Carbone; BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27, Dominique-Antoine Carbone; BB/11/10387, 33613 x 27, Paul Carbone; on the Rodis (Maria's family), see Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, PV du 16.08.1901, interrogatoire de Mathias Rodi, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction n° enregistrement 49750, *doc. cit.*; on the Pirollis from Acquafondata (Bonaventura Pirolli's family), see Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, PV du 16.08.1901, interrogatoire de Jean Baptiste Pirolli, in AD93, 4U7/995, *id.*; on the Gallaccios, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, PV du 16.08.1901, interrogatoire de François Gallaccio, in AD93, 4U7/995, *id.*

¹⁵⁹ See description of the buildings in AVP, D1P4 320, Calepins du cadastre, 50 rue Curial.

¹⁶⁰ Rosario ran the hotel for four years, and it served as one of the main retreats for newcomers from his native region. *Archives commerciales de la France*, 25.06.1882, 862; AVP, D1P4 587, Calepins du cadastre, rue Labois-Rouillon 6 [1876]; AVP, V4E 7717, 19th arr., 1883, births, No. 3110, 16.07.1882; *Le Petit Parisien*, 22.03.1884; *Le Figaro*, 23.03.1884.

¹⁶¹ AD93, 4U7/648, 29.06.1906, Georgio c. Legras.

¹⁶² Some had already started to work at the mammoth Saint-Gobain factory at the north-eastern edge of the area. It was technically on the territory of the nearby town of Aubervilliers, but its workers were many to live on the Saint-Denis side, especially on the rue du Landy. See *JSD*, 22.05.1892; *Le Matin*, 25.09.1894; and the places of residence of Italian nationals in SDMA, CT928, "Déclarations d'étrangers." In the immediate vicinity of Legras factory, i.e. south of Av. de Paris 150, we only find in previous years, apart from Luigi Salvatore's family, from Molise (see below), one family from Piacenza (SDMA, CT928, No. 1178, and SDMA, 1F19, Census, 1891, vol. II, 144), and single men from Aosta Valley (*id.*, 321, 1486, 1609), Emilia-Romagna (*id.*, 839, 1180), and Piedmont (*id.*, 1538, 1546, 1649). Around 1890, the only other people from Molise and Caserta who could be spotted in the Plaine-Saint-Denis were isolated musicians based in La Villette (*Le Matin*, 25.09.1894, and *La Presse*, 25.09.1894).

¹⁶³ Salvatore had earlier been living in Paris, in La Villette, since the early 1880s, and had been working at the same railway company as Rosario. See SDMA, CT928, "Déclarations d'étrangers," No.

his railway job, Rosario and his wife had initially reverted to the classic solution of singing and playing music in Normandy. But they had not spent a full year on the road before hearing about the opportunity at Legras, probably through Salvatore, who himself did not take advantage of it, re-emigrating instead to London.¹⁶⁴

By the 1890s, several other first cousins of Maria Carmina had also settled in La Villette with their respective families. Just like Luigi's relatives on his father's side, those maternal cousins had recently transitioned from music to industry.¹⁶⁵ One of them was a construction worker; another worked at a sugar refinery, the main employer in the area. The latter started at Legras between January 1899 and September 1900.¹⁶⁶ Sources suggest that this glassworker cousin had himself secured the job at the factory and the dwelling in the Plaine through Rosario Verrecchia, with whom he was close.¹⁶⁷ We also know that Rosario, who spoke fluent French, helped some of his Legras colleagues from Pozzilli secure the legally required *livrets** for their underage children. He would personally go to city hall and produce, on their behalf, their fake

1737, Louis Salvatore, Av. de Paris 24. Luigi Salvatore's wife Marie Louise Varano was the sister of Rosario's wife, Angela Maria Varano. See SDMA, CT928, No. 1737; AVP, V4E 3106, Paris, 5th arr., 1882, marriages, No. 15, 7.01.1882.

¹⁶⁴ *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 12.07.1893 (Rosario's accident); Int. Salvatore (No. 5), 15.01.2017; AD14, 2 Mi EC 1000, Bayeux, 1895, births, No. 98, 27.08.1895, Catherine Verrecchia; Luigi Salvatore's wife had been part of the supporting dancers of the "Belle Otero" in 1889-1890.

¹⁶⁵ Maria Carmina's first cousin on her father's side Orazio had been a strolling musician in Normandy in the 1880s: see AD27, 4M29, Carnets de saltimbanques, Orazio Di Meo di Domenicantonio, 26.10.1884, 14.03.1885, 8.10.1885. His brother Costanzo joined a sugar factory and then Legras (see next footnote).

¹⁶⁶ ASC Filignano, marriages, 1866, 24.09.1866, Antonio Di Meo di Gaetano and Maria Assunta Di Meo di Paolo; AVP, V4E 10510, 19th arr., births, 1893, No. 808, 15.03.1893, Émile Di Meo; ASC Filignano, 1872, births, 20.08.1872, Costanzo Di Meo di Domenicantonio; 1895, marriages, 26.09.1895, Costanzo Di Meo di Domenicantonio and Maria Assunta Di Meo di Nicola; AVP, V4E 10591, Paris, 19th arr., births, 1899, No. 127, 10.01.1899, Nicandre Di Meo. The Lebaudy sugar factory, located avenue de Flandre, employed more than 1,000 workers in 1898 and almost 1,500 in 1902. (cf. *L'Univers*, 19.02.1898; APP, BA 20, Rapports par quinzaine et par arrondissement de la situation industrielle (1903-1904), Police municipale, 19e arrondissement, M. Gautier, officier de paix, Rapport, "Commerce et industrie du 19e arr. pendant la 2e quinzaine de décembre 1902," 1.01.1903); AVP, V4E 10591, Paris, 19th arr., births, 1899, No. 127, 10.01.1899, Nicandre Di Meo, son of Costanzo Di Meo and Maria Assunta Di Meo; SDMA, E309, births, 1900, vol. 2, No. 1149, 2.09.1900, Ernest Verrecchia, son of Rosario Verrecchia: Costanzo di Meo already lived in the Plaine at that date, as he was a witness to the birth declaration of Rosario's son Ernest.

¹⁶⁷ Costanzo's first address in the Plaine is the same as Rosario's, before moving to another building nearby a few months later: SDMA, E 313, births, 1901, vol. 1, No. 883, 10.07.1901, Vincent Di Meo.

birth certificates in support of the applications.¹⁶⁸ The centrality of Rosario's role would match the indirect recollection of Salvatore's great-grandson, who affirms that the two brothers-in-law acted as "the emigration channel"¹⁶⁹ to Saint-Denis. What is certain is that upon arrival, Giacinto and his two eldest sons Luigi and Giustino resided at No. 100, where Rosario and his wife were already living. And they were not alone. A number of families from their native region seized the same opportunity and moved into the cités.¹⁷⁰

This type of network based on kinship and village ties, featuring key figures who opened the way for others, helped residents negotiate their adjustment to the immigration context, which was rife with challenges. The language, the job, the landscape, the food, the neighbours: a lot needed to be processed, and networks provided critical insight and information, not to mention material help. People's experience in the Plaine, and self-identification as strangers, surely varied according to the speed at which they were able to make a living and take part in social life. On both of those counts, the help of a "*pays*" (a person from the same region) or a relative

¹⁶⁸ Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 17.08.1901, audition of Angel Vettese, who started at Legras's on 18 or 19.02.1901 at age 13, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction No. 49750, *doc. cit.*

¹⁶⁹ Int. Salvatore (No. 5), 15.01.2017.

¹⁷⁰ There were, for example, members of the Tedeschi family, also from Demanio, with whom the Pirolli were closely connected. A few years later, when Luigi Pirolli's cousin Francesco Pirolli (whose maternal grandfather's family had been slaughtered in 1867 –see above, note 19) would arrive in the Plaine, he would reside with one of the Tedeschi from Demanio, already present in Saint-Denis in the spring 1901, named Benedetto. Benedetto was also Francesco's cousin, and lived across the street from Luigi and his family. The Tedeschi had been represented in La Villette just as Maria Carmina Pirolli's cousins, and could also have been responsible for spreading the word in Demanio about the Plaine factory. See ASC Pozzilli, 1888, No. 37, Pirolli Francesco di Beniamino, 24.03.1888; ASC Pozzilli, 1854, No. 29, Pirolli Beniamino di Nicandro; AD93, 1E66/326, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1913, Vol. 1, No. 411, 5.07.1913; ASC Pozzilli, 1886, births, No. 84, 12.10.1886, Benedetto Tedeschi di Agostino; FNA, BB/11/13343, 26126 x 30, Benoît (Benedetto) Tedeschi; ASC Pozzilli, 1887, No. 63, 18.08.1887, Maria Teresa Pirolli di Angelo; AVP, V4E 7736, 19th arr., 1887, births, No. 2965, 16.10.1887, Marie Antoinette Tedeschi, daughter of Bonifacio Tedeschi and Maria Carmina Pirolli; ASC Pozzilli, births, 1852, No. 35, 16.11.1852, Bonifacio Tedeschi. Note that most of the families from Demanio not represented in Paris and Saint-Denis had members who had taken other emigration routes, either to other French cities (Lyon, Marseille), Scotland or the United States (Pennsylvania in particular).

could go a long way. And far from dismembering families, the migration process could actually reinforce ties of kindred.¹⁷¹

The intertwining of family and what could be called “micro-diasporic” solidarity would be once again visible in the case of Spaniards.¹⁷² The earliest residents from Northern Spain who were hired by Legras in the late 1900s had been formerly living with compatriots in *garnis** in Levallois-Perret, a suburb to the north-west of Paris, in an infamous neighbourhood called “*le quartier des Passages*.”¹⁷³ Originally cattle-herders from the remote Montes de Pas, at the southernmost edge of Cantabria, their families had a long tradition of smuggling, nomadism, and emigration, which remarkably endures to this day.¹⁷⁴ Initially, their cluster in Levallois featured only “Pasiegos” like them, but they were later joined by others from the Montes de Somo, a few miles to the South –in the Merindades of Burgos– with whom they had long-standing family, cultural and trade ties.¹⁷⁵ Interestingly, Pasiegos had historically been wary of considering themselves Spanish, which would suggest that they would only identify as such, if ever, in the emigration context.

¹⁷¹ Fortunata Piselli, *Parentela ed emigrazione. Mutamenti e continuità in una comunità calabrese*, Turin: Einaudi, 1981, 4; Giovanna Campani, “Les réseaux familiaux, villageois et régionaux des immigrés italiens en France,” doctoral diss. in ethnology, University of Nice, 1988.

¹⁷² On the ambiguity of the diaspora lexicon, see Rogers Brubaker, “The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 28 (2005), No. 1, 1–19; “Revisiting ‘The ‘diaspora’ diaspora,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 40 (2017), No. 9, 1556–61.

¹⁷³ Patrick Gervaise, “Les Passages à Levallois-Perret,” *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁴ Adriano García-Lomas, *Los Pasiegos: estudio crítico, etnográfico y pintoresco, años 1011 a 1960*, Santander: Librería Estudio, 1977; José Manuel Miner Otamendi, *Los Pueblos malditos: agotes, pasiegos, vaqueiros de alzada, maragatos, chuetas*, Madrid: Espasa-calpe, 1978; Susan T. Freeman, *The Pasiegos: Spaniards in No Man’s Land*, Chicago (IL), London: University of Chicago Press, 1979; Ángeles González-Sinde, “Aux confins du plateau castillan. Chez les derniers nomades d’Espagne,” *Courrier international*, 1.02.2001; Gregorio Lasaga Larreta, *Los Pasiegos*, Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2004.

¹⁷⁵ The Pasiegos’ traditional area of pasture extended to the north of the Merindades (north of Soncillo, Pedrosa, Villabáscos). See Elías Rubio Marcos, *Pasiegos de Burgos: Los últimos trashumantes*, Burgos: Elías Rubio Marcos, 2005; María del Carmen Arribas Magro, *Espinosa de los Monteros – Los Montes de Somo y de Pas*, Madrid: ACCI, 2016.

The first French experience of these migrants was very similar to the Pirollis'. All of them had been active as peddlars in Paris from the late 1880s, and had even been seen in Normandy as well. Joined by their spouses at an earlier stage than their Italian predecessors, they specialised less in music than in food items. In summer, waffles, ice creams and biscuits known as *barquillos* in Spanish, and *plaisirs* or *oublies*, in French; in winter, roasted chestnuts. They were used to employing and dispatching swarms of minor street vendors throughout the capital, children entrusted to them in their native region. This is why some of them, in the late 1900s, were ideally positioned to supply the glass factories of the northern suburbs with a new underage manpower, just as their Italian peers had done a decade earlier. These *padrones** did not renounce their biscuit-making business altogether –they and their wives would bake the cookies during the week and have their young wards go out and sell them on Sundays.

In the following diagram, the first Spanish residents of No. 100 Av. de Paris –and to a lesser extent at No. 96– are situated in their original network of strolling merchants. Individuals from the Pasiega valleys are marked in orange, those from the Merindades de Burgos in blue. It seems that all *padrones* were initially, or simultaneously, strolling merchants. This graph highlights not only the combination of micro-regional and family ties, but also the centrality of certain individuals: for example, José Arroyo (identified by his initials “JA” in the diagram) connected the two migrant communities from both sides of the mountains. It also points to the important mobility of individuals and their families between the different addresses.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ Other mobilities are not visible in the graph: Frédéric Pelayo (“FP”), for instance, went from Levallois to No. 100 Av. de Paris in the Plaine, then to Montrouge (AD92, ENUMLEVN1906, Levallois, 1906, births, No. 504, 29.05.1906; AD93, 1E66/262, Saint-Denis, births, 1908, vol. 2, No. 1337, 9.10.1908; AD92, ENUMLEV, Levallois, 1910, births, No. 864, 14.10.1910). See following footnote for more detail about the graph.

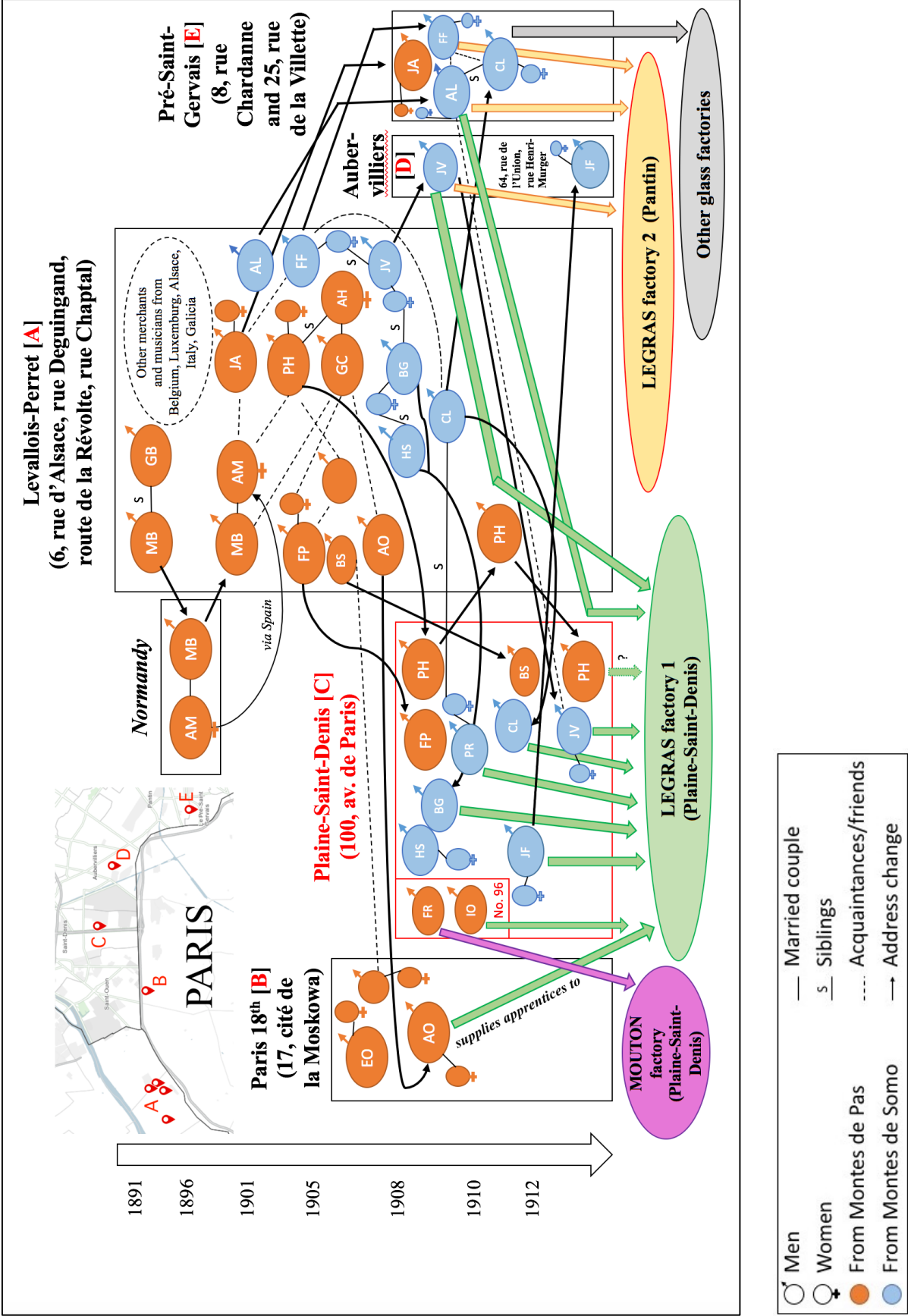


Figure 8 (previous page):
The networks of migrants from Montes de Pas and Montes de Somo
*in the north of Paris, 1890-1910*¹⁷⁷

Generally speaking, the way in which family based migration chains worked for the inhabitants of the cités rested on three pillars, visible in Luigi Pirolli's story as in many others. Men came in general alone, whether they were initially single or already married, and sent for their wives later.¹⁷⁸ Luigi's father had briefly returned to Maria Carmina at least once, in 1904, and she only emigrated to the Plaine in 1907 with Luigi's siblings.¹⁷⁹ In only a few cases of resident families was it the other way around, with wives and adult children arriving first while the husband stayed in the village only to join them later.¹⁸⁰

The second element was the help relatives provided in finding accommodation. First, they could share their dwelling with the newcomers. Sources record examples of

¹⁷⁷ Friendly connections have been inferred from witnesses at marriages, birth or death declarations. Initials stand for the following names: CL: Ceferino López; PH: Pedro Herrero; JV: Jacinto Zacarias Varona; MB: Miguel Barquin; AM: Ascensión Barquin née Martínez; JA: Jean Arroyo; BG: Baltasar Gómez; HS: Hermenegildo Saíz; FP: Frederico Pelayo; GC: Gabino Crespo; AH: Andrea Crespo née Herrero; AL: Antonio López; FF: Facundo Fernández; AO: Adolfo Ortiz; EO: Emilio Ortiz; PR: Pedro Rios; BS: Bienvenido Saíz; IO: Ildefonso Ortiz.

¹⁷⁸ And sometimes their mothers as well, when they had no one to provide for them in the village (Int. Leo, No. 21, 1.08.2016; AD93, 1E66/390, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1922, vol. 1, No. 367, Vincenza Gabriele née Orsini).

¹⁷⁹ FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino Pirolli; Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016; "Préfecture de Police, Extrait du registre d'immatriculation, No. 4967, feuillet 67, Pirolli Emilia," private collection of M. and Mme Parravano. Another example was Juan Illanes, from Extremadura, arrived at No. 96 with his brother during the Great War and joined by his wife and children three years later (FNA, 19770885/230, 12408 x 35, Juan and Agapita Illanes; 19770873/114, 18134 x 31, Manuel Illanes; 19770886/19, 16897 x 35, André Angel Illanes). Manuel Arellano, whom we have already mentioned, arrived twice in the Plaine without his wife, and twice she joined him later (Int. Arellano-Ulloa, No. 31, 18.08.2016). As for Gaetana Ricci née Grimaldi, she left No. 96 with her family at the outset of the Great War; her father and children came back to the Plaine without her in the late 1910s, while she made her way back to No. 102 av. Wilson in the mid 1920s (see AD93, 1E66/372, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1912, No. 138, 6.02.1912; AD93, 1E66/341, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1921, No. 1104, 12.11.1921; FNA, 1977883/71, 14436 x 34, Girolamo Bottinelli and Libera Ricci).

¹⁸⁰ Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, audition of François Saverio Tari, 1.09.1901, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction No. 49750, *doc. cit.*

Italians or Lorrainers moving in with their siblings or cousins at Nos. 96 and 100.¹⁸¹ In addition, migrants could pass on their apartment to their kin.¹⁸² Luigi Salvatore and Rosario Verrecchia may have made a deal of that kind, as the former left at the same time the latter arrived.¹⁸³

The third important aspect of these migratory chains was that they were encouraged by employers, as this supplemented the work of emissaries sent to procure manpower on their behalf.¹⁸⁴ Sources suggest that hiring commitments were offered to workers for their relatives, even before they became mandatory during the Great War. For example, one Lorrainer at No. 98 had started at Legras in May 1882, just one day after he had left his native village; we know his brother-in-law had been hired by Legras a few months earlier.¹⁸⁵ Another resident at No. 96 had arrived in 1913 with a job offer from Mouton.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸¹ Augustin Austett in 1887, at his sister's at No. 100 (FNA, BB/11/2166, 7779 x 88, Augustin Austett); Francesco Caporusio, in 1912, at his cousin's at No. 96 (see FNA, 19770894/217, 4281 x 38, Thomas Caporusio).

¹⁸² Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en banlieue rouge..." *op. cit.*, 149.

¹⁸³ Others examples involve the families of two brothers from Extremadura, who followed each other at No. 96 in the 1920s, and the story of Estanislao González: having taken over the apartment at the first floor of the front building at No. 96 from a Spanish couple who had initially taken him as a lodger, he then hosted his cousin Isabel with him, his wife and his children, before letting her become the tenant of the apartment and moving to one of the constructions further back in the courtyard. AD93 D2 M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 Census, 96 av. Wilson; AD93 D2 M8 91, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 96 av. Wilson (Damian and Michel Luengo); FNA, 19770877/73, 41998 x 32, Santiago Luengo; BB/11/12221, 15851 x 29, Basilio Luengo; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018.

¹⁸⁴ See below, notes 302 and 318.

¹⁸⁵ SMDA, 1 K 1/38-47, Electoral registers, Antoine Winckler, 1894-1903; AD93, 1E66/363, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1903, No. 99, 26.01.1903; FNA, BB/11/1759, 2075 x 84, Verreries et Cristalleries de Saint-Denis, Legras, certificate of employment, 4.02.1885, Michel Vinckler (Antoine's son), and draft of a letter from the Minister of Justice to the Préfet de police, 8.07.1885; *J.O.R.F.*, 23.02.1912, p. 1684, Feisthauer Martin (Antoine's brother-in-law).

¹⁸⁶ FNA, 19780030/235, 2149 x 48, Teodoro Berrocoso. In another case, the director of Mouton wrote to Manuel Arellano: "*si De Pedro Hipoliso peut venir en même temps que vous, je l'occuperai également dans un poste quelconque. Ci-joint un certificat pour lui.*" (Letter from the Director of Mouton to M. Manuel Arellano, 28.11.1914, private collection of Mme Arellano-Ulloa). In 1922, a 24-year old Spaniard arrived with his wife at No. 100, where his uncle had been living for a while and secured him a job at a local foundry (FNA, 19790863/178, Leandro García González and Julie López Negrete Rojo). Garcia did not carry a contract with him as he emigrated to France, but surely his uncle (whom we can identify as Clemente González, living at No. 100 in 1921) had the green light from the Aciéries de Paris and Outreau management to make his nephew come and join the factory. Relatives did not need to be currently employed by the factory. Another resident who had worked at Legras in the

This first type of network rested in part on the presence of a few pioneers, who had mastered language skills and other abilities which their friends and relatives did not possess. Their role, though crucial, was essentially limited to paving the way for relatives and fellow villagers. Sources point to the presence in the Plaine of go-between characters of another sort. These brokers wielded influence beyond their original network, and were able to help others on an ethno-national basis.¹⁸⁷ A contemporary observer called them “emigration patriarchs.”¹⁸⁸ They could alternatively be dubbed *meso-network heads*, as opposed to the likes of Rosario Verrecchia and José Arroyo, who were pivotal in *micro-networks*.

For Spaniards, the main figure of this kind in the Plaine was a man called Joachim (Joaquín) de Garate. A cooper from the Basque country turned wine merchant, Joachim had been one of the very first migrants of Spanish origin to settle in the Plaine, along with his brother, in 1879, after a year in southwestern France.¹⁸⁹ His first host in the Plaine was a French carter, with whom he became close friends.¹⁹⁰ After Joachim became a French citizen in 1892 and both he and his brother married French women, his status in the Plaine rose constantly.¹⁹¹ As a teacher at the Plaine primary school, his wife was already well regarded in the area. This became even more true as the couple grew increasingly wealthy once Joachim founded his own business at the turn of the

1890s and who had gone home by the time his son started in 1904, may have put in a word for him with his former bosses (see FNA, BB/11/2561, 5782 x 91, Joseph Schiel et Madeleine Schiel née Bour; FNA, BB/11/4804, 5866 x 08, Pierre Schiel).

¹⁸⁷ On brokerage in that context from a sociological perspective, see Thomas Faist, “Brokerage in Cross-Border Migration: From Networks to Social Mechanisms,” Bielefeld: University of Bielefeld, 2014 (COMCAD Working Papers, 121).

¹⁸⁸ Jean Lemoine, “L’émigration bretonne à Paris,” *art. cit.*, 366.

¹⁸⁹ FNA, BB/11/2235, 14792 x 88, José Joaquín De Garate. In 1891, there were only fifteen Spanish men in all of Saint-Denis, and as many Spanish women (*BMOSD*, 30.08.1891, 2).

¹⁹⁰ See SDMA, 1F15, 1881 Census, 93 av. de Paris: De Garate is listed as “relative” of Joseph Bottelier, cart-driver, probably a mistake. The two would remain close for years (see APP, CB 92.2, 1905/558, 29.09.1905; AD93, 1E66/314, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1907, Vol. 1, No. 305, 20.06.1907; *Archives commerciales de la France*, 4.12.1909, p. 1936).

¹⁹¹ SDMA, E 294, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1896, No. 118, 7.04.1896; declaration by Joseph Nazaire de Garate (Joseph’s brother) in SDMA, CT928, No. 485, 19.10.1888; SDMA, 1K1/37, Electoral registers, 1893.

century, helped by the inheritance from his father-in-law (and by evading tax on a large scale). The couple would end up purchasing a bar-hotel, and later an entire tenement building in the Plaine.¹⁹² Aside from his business ties with bar owners, Joachim cultivated acquaintances through the Plaine cycling-club, which he had founded and led for years.¹⁹³ Supplying wine to a wide number of private people, including residents at No. 96,¹⁹⁴ he made many friends. His closest ones included a member of the city council,¹⁹⁵ and also Poullain, the bar-owner at No. 102.¹⁹⁶ His connections also reached well inside the walls of Legras. He grew close enough to the glassworkers Edmond Derhée and his father –mentioned in the very first lines of this thesis–, to hire them as business representatives in the early 1900s.¹⁹⁷

It was only natural, in those circumstances, that M. and Mme de Garate would become points of contact for Spanish families when they started arriving in 1908-1909, even though Joachim was not from the exact same region as them. Only a few weeks after two *padrones* had arrived at No. 100 from Levallois in the summer of 1909,

¹⁹² Joachim moved from employee to co-owner of his wine business in late 1899 (see SDMA, E305, Saint-Denis, births, 1899, No. 1285, 28.10.1899, Beatrix de Garate, and *Archives commerciales de la France*, 1.11.1899, p. 1382). The year before, his father-in-law had been legally declared missing, opening his succession (*J.O.R.F.*, 16.05.1898, 3139). One day in 1905, he had 5,500 francs in his safe, when most industrial workers in the area were making between 1 and 6 francs a day (APP, CB 92.2, 1905/558, 29.09.1905). That same year, he was sentenced to pay 122 fines for evading tax on alcohol, for a total of 18,500 francs, which he fought on procedural grounds all the way to the Cour de cassation, to no avail (see *Bulletin des arrêts de la Cour de cassation rendus en matière criminelle*, 1909, No. 1, 84–5, 22.01.1909, Rejet du pourvoi de De Garate José-Joachim). On the bar-hotel and then the building owned by the De Garates, see AD93, 1739W4, 10.11.1919, Cession José Joaquin de Garate à Francisco de Garate (36 rue de la Montjoie), and Cour d'appel de Paris (7th chamber), 5.11.1926, Époux Bouzonnie c. de Garate, in *Dalloz, Recueil hebdomadaire de jurisprudence en matière civile, commerciale, administrative et de droit public*, 1926, 521–2 (57 av. Wilson). Note that the building owned by the De Garates in the 1920s did not have any visible ethnic function: only 1 in 42 households were of Spanish origin in 1926 (AD93, D2M8/91, 1926, vol. 2, 57–59 Av. Wilson).

¹⁹³ *Le Véloce-sport*, 20.06.1895, 456.

¹⁹⁴ AD93, 4U7/631, 23.12.1904, De Garate c. Abrioux père.

¹⁹⁵ Alphonse Lebacle, who was elected to the city council in 1900, had joined Joachim at city hall when he had declared the birth of his son André in 1897, and his death the next year (see SDMA, E297, Saint-Denis, 1897, births, No. 1079, 18.09.1897; E303, Saint-Denis, 1898, deaths, No. 1164, 9.12.1898; CT514, Élections municipales du 6.05.1900).

¹⁹⁶ SDMA E 330, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1904, vol. 1, No. 144, 13.04.1904, Eugène Frédéric Poullain and Marie Léontine Joséphine Voisin: Joachim was one of Eugène's two witnesses.

¹⁹⁷ APP, CB 92.2, 1905/558, 29.09.1905.

Joachim was already on friendly terms with them.¹⁹⁸ It is not unreasonable to surmise that he might have helped them settle in the Plaine, possibly even serving as an intermediary between Legras's directors and the network from Montes de Pas and Montes de Somo. In any case, Joachim and his wife forged bonds with a number of those families from No. 100.¹⁹⁹

The extent of De Garate's social network is remarkable, and yet it was not to remain unparalleled in the Plaine. During the Great War, a resident at No. 96 from Asturias, who had been living in France for many years, served his countrymen in various capacities: interpreter, procurer of Spanish and French administrative documents, job purveyor and, to their dismay, occasional crook.²⁰⁰

For Italian residents, one of the people who grew to carry a clout that went beyond their initial, micro-geographic networks was Luigi Pirolli himself. After the First World War, he was simultaneously a decorated war veteran, a head of department at the glass factory, and the owner of an Italian grocery on the Avenue. The role of his wife Maria and his daughter Mariantonia should not be understated. They were the ones running the family shop on a daily basis –and Mariantonia was certainly even more able than her father to offer all kind of help to Italians, as she had received a double primary education, both in France and in Italy.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Their names were Baltazar Gómez and Hermenegildo Saíz (BG and HS on figure 8). Joachim De Garate was a witness to the declaration of birth of most of their children (AD93, 1E66/264, Saint-Denis, births, 1909, vol. 2, No. 926, 6.08.1909, Mercédès Gomez; 1E66/267, Saint-Denis, births, 1911, vol. 1, No. 484, 19.04.1911, Éléonore Saíz; 1E66/275, Saint-Denis, births, 1915, vol. 1, No. 555, Marie Lucie Saíz; 1E66/285, Saint-Denis, births, 1922, vol. 1, No. 457: 26.03.1922, Gabriel Saíz). On Hermenegildo's and Baltazar's arrival presence in Levallois, see FNA, BB/11/12555, 32558 x 29; AD92, ENUMLEVN1908, Levallois, 1908, births, No. 422, 2.05.1908.

¹⁹⁹ AD93, 1E66/324, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1912, Vol. 1, No. 202, 11.04.1912, Epifanio Fernandez and Fidelia Ruiz. Both Blanche de Garate (Joachim's wife) and Balthazar Gómez were witnesses.

²⁰⁰ AVP, D2U6 198, Procureur de la République c. César Remigio Iglesias, José Gonzalez, José Jésus Hocès de la Guardia, 10.01.1918. That man had been living for years with a French-born woman. See AD93, 1E66/334, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1918, No. 173, 2.04.1918, César Remigio Iglesias and Clémence Juillard.

²⁰¹ Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016.

In 1922, Luigi founded, along with one of his brothers and a cousin newly arrived from Normandy –a son of his old, music-playing uncle Pietro Carlo–, a mutual benefit society called “*Stella meridionale*.” This further indicates the centrality of Luigi for Italians in the area at the time.²⁰² And when in 1927 his naturalisation process stalled, Luigi managed to secure a recommendation from Aristide Briand, the French minister of Foreign Affairs: “*M. Pirolli est considéré comme un très bon sujet, ayant une certaine influence dans les milieux italiens, et sa naturalisation pourrait en entraîner sept ou huit autres.*”²⁰³ It is unclear through which channel Luigi obtained this high-level support. But this shows that local politicians understood he was a pivotal figure in the neighbourhood.²⁰⁴

Of course, a number of newcomers had no relative in the Plaine and arrived independently.²⁰⁵ Examples of lone migrants could be found here and there in the Plaine.²⁰⁶ But even for them, loose connections to someone already there may have played a role in helping them settle in, at least in the first days and weeks. Traces of such solidarity survive in the sources. For instance, M. Legras had employed, among his first workers, former colleagues and neighbours from his own village in the

²⁰² *Recueil des actes administratifs de la Préfecture du département de la Seine*, Feb. 1922, 228.

²⁰³ Note by Aristide Briand’s Secrétaire particulier, dated 20.02.1928, in FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27. The note went on: “*M. Briand s’intéresse tout particulièrement à M. Pirolli et serait heureux d’apprendre qu’il a été possible de réserver un accueil favorable à sa demande.*” (“Mr. Pirolli is regarded as an excellent person, with some influence among Italians, and his naturalization could cause seven or eight others to follow. Mr. Briand is particularly interested in Mr. Pirolli’s case”).

²⁰⁴ In the archives of Briand’s chief of staff, we could find no trace of the intervention that brought Pirolli’s case to the minister’s attention (FNA, 320Mi, Fonds Gilbert Peycelon, 1913–32). On this broader issue of political support to naturalisation requests, see chapter 4, point 2.

²⁰⁵ Historians have rightly pointed out that this type of migrants should not be overlooked. See Clé Lesger, Leo Lucassen, Marlou Schrover, “Is there life outside the migrant network? German immigrants in XIXth century Netherlands and the need for a more balanced migration typology,” *Annales de démographie historique*, Vol. 104, No. 2, 2002, 29–50.

²⁰⁶ They included a young orphan who came all by himself from the Somme to work at Legras; a Czech worker arriving from German Saar; another worker from Zanzibar; an old, homeless Dutch woman; a few adolescents trying to reach the front during the Great War; and a handful of deserters running away from it. APP, CB 92.5, 1909/665, 3.08.1909; CB 92.19, 1923/908, 26.07.1923; CB 92.27, 1931/405, 21.02.1931; CB 89.48, 1915/16, 8.01.1915; CB 92.12, 1916/9, 5.01.1916; CB 89.48, 1915/955, 3.11.1915.

Vosges.²⁰⁷ The area where this was the most visible was accommodation, through the practice of *garnis**, which we shall address in more detail in the next chapter.²⁰⁸ “Compatriotism” was the cheapest, and perhaps most spontaneous form of accommodating migrants.²⁰⁹

And yet while rooms and beds to let offered by people from Brittany, Italy or Spain existed in the Plaine from an early stage, the hosts’ origin did not seem to be a priority for migrants. Affordability and location were far more important.²¹⁰ Knowing the concierges would have been of even greater value, since it was they, not the landlords, who selected new tenants. But when Alsatian and Lorrainer women started to hold most of the Plaine’s “*loges*,” the flow of migrants from their region had already run dry.²¹¹ Even with concierges, other factors may have superseded ethnic solidarity, including bribes –as an unflattering, and perhaps not that unusual, episode on the part the concierge at No. 98 suggests: she was caught demanding money to let an apartment to one family over another.²¹²

²⁰⁷ Int. Bour, No. 19, 14.09.2016. In the 1880s and 1890s, four residents at No. 100 employed at the glass factory hailed from the exact same village as François-Théodore Legras (Claudon). The same would later be true, during the Great War, of the directors of Delaunay-Belleville and Hotchkiss, who were known for recruiting workers from their native regions, Ardennes and Alsace respectively: see Pierre de Peretti, Saint-Denis 1870/1920, *op. cit.*, 15–6; SDMA, 4 H 3/185, Anonymous letter to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 19.05.1918.

²⁰⁸ See chapter 3, p. 272 *sqq.*

²⁰⁹ Alain Faure, Claire Lévy-Vroelant, *Une chambre en ville: hôtels meublés et garnis de Paris, 1860-1990*, Paris: Créaphis, 2007, 73. The practice of paying board to someone from the same region was widespread in the Plaine, as was the appellation “*compatriote*” (see e.g. AD93, 4U7/715, 22.05.1914, Peña c. Fernández; also, chapter 3, note 112).

²¹⁰ During the tenure of the elder M. Poullain at the hotel at No. 102, in the last part of the 19th century, there is no trace in the sources of tenants from his native district in Normandy. By contrast, Mr. Mandagot, the owner at No. 102 from the late 1920s to the 1960s, is remembered to have hosted fellow Aveyronnais at the hotel in the 1950s. Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016.

²¹¹ On the network of Alsatian and Lorrainer concierges in the Plaine, aside from Barbe Sommer née Engelmann at No. 96 and her daughter-in-law at No. 98 (from the early 1910s), see APP, CB 92.1, 1905/112, 12.02.1905 (No. 86 av. de Paris); CB 92.2, 1905/836, 16.08.1905 (No. 84); CB 92.4, 1908/425, 20.04.1908 (No. 133); CB 92.9, 1912/949, 23.09.1912 (No. 92).

²¹² APP, CB 92.21, 1925/54, 9.01.1925. Her colleague at No. 100 may also have received some form of gifts from the Spanish *padrones* when they needed to secure their rooms to carry out their activities. When interrogated, she provided the police with favourable statements about them (AVP, D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, Rapport Girardier, 27.12.1909).

As evidenced by the stories in this section, the residents' movements were based on possibilities, initiatives and external help. The varying proportions of these elements, as well as the migrations themselves, could entail meaningful changes in peoples' social status and self- and external identifications. We need now to examine these issues in further detail in the context of one particular migration process: the importation of children, which affected the trajectories of a disproportionate number of residents over the years.

2.2. The import-export trade in child workers

A close analysis of child smuggling networks, some of which gave the cités a global –though short-lived and ominous– fame, reveals a phenomenon that was counter-intuitive in two ways. It turns out to have been less cruel, and even more transnational, than is usually thought.

Throughout our period, residents were offered migration related services by shady characters. Most of the times these were reliable, but in some instances, they were not. In 1911, a building labourer of Italian origin living at No. 96 was convinced by his lodger to entrust him with all his official documents, to have them translated at the Italian embassy, which the lodger said was compulsory. The man and the documents vanished.²¹³ Years later, a worker from Romania living at the hotel at No. 102 was getting ready for a new migration project, this time to Canada. He found in Paris a compatriot who had been recommended to him as a representative of a shipping company. Trusting him because “*il avait servi d’intermédiaire pour des compatriotes*,” he handed that man 1,500 francs which were supposed to pay for the passport fees, and never heard from him again.²¹⁴

²¹³ APP, CB 92.7, 1911/406, 2.05.1911.

²¹⁴ APP, CB 92.23, 1926/905, 21-26.06.1926 (“because he had acted as an intermediary for some countrymen”). Fake smugglers had also multiplied at the Franco-Spanish border during the Great War. See Consul de España en Bayona, “Información pacticada en Tartas (departamento de Las Landas), en

But the heyday of cheats and crooks occurred at two specific moments in time, the late 1890s and the years around 1910; and these circumstances had an influence over a large part of the migration flows into the cités. The French legislation against child labour, passed in 1892, prohibited the employment in factories of anyone below the age of 13.²¹⁵ This outraged the glass industry, as it had come on top of a series of increasingly restrictive provisions passed by the young Third Republic since the 1870s. The *maîtres-verriers* had used child labour for decades, if not centuries, and were not ready to dispense with it. The consensus was clear: “*l’ouvrier ne [peut] travailler sans ses aides-apprentis.*”²¹⁶ While lobbying the government,²¹⁷ the glass barons soon decided to circumvent the law by resorting to foreign children, whose age was harder to check.

At Legras, these practices became common from 1896, and would last at least two decades.²¹⁸ Sources show clearly that the factory swiftly replaced the bulk of its

complimiento de lo prevenido por Real Orden nº 9 de 29 de Marzo de 1916,” 22.05.1916 in AGA, 54/6.072, Política de España con Francia: Emigración, Vigilancia de la emigración española en Francia, folder “Año 1916. Vigilancia de la emigración española en Francia. Contratos de trabajo.”

²¹⁵ Law of 2.11.1892 “sur le travail des enfants, des filles mineures et des femmes dans les établissements industriels.” The law provided that children could start working at 12 if they had graduated from primary school and produced a certificate of physical aptitude.

²¹⁶ Handwritten note [unsigned] from the management at Legras, attached to a Letter from the company to the Plaine-Saint-Denis police chief, dated 15.11.1901, in AD93, 4U7/997 (“The glassworker cannot work without his young apprentices”). On the work of young workers in glass factories, see Charles Benoist, *art. cit.*; Maurice Talmeyr, *art. cit.*; Charles Delzant, *Le Travail de l’enfance dans les verreries*, Paris: Les Temps nouveaux, 1912. In the run-up to the 1892 law, the glass industry claimed that “*pour devenir bon verrier, l’enfant doit commencer au plus tard à 12 ans son apprentissage*” and that this work was not particularly difficult nor unhealthy for children (FNA, F22/505, “Rapport sur le travail dans les verreries présenté par la Chambre syndicale de la Verrerie,” no date [before Nov. 1892] – “to become good glassmakers, children must start as apprentices at 12 at the latest.”)

²¹⁷ See FNA, F22/505. In 1895, Legras was granted a temporary exemption to employ a few children who were “almost” 13 (FNA, F22/505, “Verreries. Enquête,” Letter of the Labour inspector M. Laporte to the Minister of Trade and Industry, 7.11.1895). In 1900-1901, he negotiated with the Ministry to be exempt from a new provision adopted on 30.03.1900 prohibiting labour in discontinuous workdays –5 hours of work, 7 hours of rest, 5 hours of work, alleging that his workers liked the old system (AD93, 4U7/997, Letter from M. Legras to Commissaire de police de la Plaine-Saint-Denis, 27.11.1901). In reality, they had struck to demand that the new law be applied (*Le Soleil*, 10.05.1900).

²¹⁸ In 1927, the factory still had about 200 apprentices (*L’Émancipation*, 14.05.1927, 4.06.1927), but it is unclear whether any were underage.

youngest manpower, which had been exploited for years, by little Casertani and Molisani.²¹⁹ In addition to escaping regulations, this was a way to keep finding the necessary supply of labour for the lowest-paid positions, as the toilsome conditions were starting to turn even poor French people away.²²⁰ This endemic shortage of manpower for the factory's hardest positions would be constant for decades, and last well into the interwar period.²²¹ The children supply was also crucial for adult glassworkers who were being paid on piecework, and who had an incentive to have as many children as possible under their authority.²²²

In German Alsace-Lorraine, unaffected by protective legislation passed in the 1870s in the rest of the Empire, children frequently worked long days in mines and glass factories.²²³ In certain regions of Spain or Italy, the practice of taking children around Europe to work as street vendors and young performers was also very old; the demand for young glassworkers tapped into well-established practices.²²⁴ Boys like the youth employed by Luigi's uncles –girls less so– had been routinely consigned by

²¹⁹ See AVP, D1U6 219, 5.11.1884, No. 6088, D1U6 316, 19.11.1888, No. 5415, and D1U6 373, 19.11.1890, No. 5397, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, Procureur de la République contre François-Théodore Legras (three rulings); FNA, F/22/505; FNA, F/22/452; FNA, BB/18/6111, 23 BL 164, "Enquête à l'usine Legras à Saint-Denis. Livrets délivrés à de jeunes étrangers sur production d'actes d'état-civil falsifiés. 1899-1912."

²²⁰ Legras said to the press that he could not find enough French children, who "preferred other professions" (JSD, 13.08.1896). The boss of another Plaine factory had declared in 1894 that he had started hiring Italians since "the French had a hard time adjusting to the heat" in the workplace (JSD, 22.07.1894, "A l'usine Malétra").

²²¹ See FNA, BB/11/12172, 13433 x 29, Filippo Quaglieri, Memo by the Ministry of Justice [no date, 1928].

²²² A Labour inspector noted in 1901 the "*complicité des pères de famille, ouvriers verriers, qui travaillent aux pièces et ont tout intérêt à faire embaucher leurs propres enfants ou de jeunes parents, car, si les enfants manquent, la production baisse et l'ouvrier est le premier atteint.*" (J.O.R.F. *Lois et décrets, partie non officielle*, 17.10.1901, 6496 – "the complicity of fathers, the senior glassmakers, who work on piecework and whose interest lies in having their own children or young relatives hired, for when there are not enough children, production decreases and the glassmaker is the first to be affected.").

²²³ David Allen Harvey, *Constructing Class and Nationality in Alsace, 1830-1945*, DeKalb (IL): Northern Illinois University Press, 2001, 82–3.

²²⁴ See John Zucchi, *op. cit.*; Mario Enrico Ferrari, "I mercanti di fanciulli nelle campagne e la tratta dei minori, una realtà sociale dell'Italia fra '800 e '900," *Movimento operaio e socialista*, Vol. 6 (1983), No. 1, 87–108; Patrick Heiz, "Émigration et travail des enfants," in Jean-Charles Vegliante (ed.), *La Traduction-migration. Déplacements et transferts culturels Italie-France*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000, 61–95; Susan T. Freeman, *The Pasiegos, op. cit.*

struggling parents to people who would employ them on the streets, provide for their food and clothing, and send the extra income, if any, to the family.²²⁵ But cases of mistreatment and an increasing cultural sensitivity to the well-being of children had prompted calls to rein in what critics denounced as a new form of slave trade.²²⁶

When Italian children started to be leased and exported to work in glass factories, the Lyon and Paris areas became the main destinations.²²⁷ At least one resident at No. 100 from Pozzilli had been prosecuted in Italy for accompanying minors to a glass factory in the Lyon area. But Italian law, well-equipped against strolling professions and “wandering trades,” lacked a provision specifically addressing this new traffic, and that man had eventually been acquitted.²²⁸

The courts did punish, by contrast, the trafficker who supplied Legras with his first twelve Italian apprentices in 1896, and who moved to No. 100 two years later. This man, Donato Voza, came from Casalvieri, a notorious hub of traffickers in the mountains north of Pozzilli. Crime traditions were not uncommon for *padroni* at No. 100, before and after the child-smuggling years. Pasquale Greco and his son Bernardo,

²²⁵ For instance, Achille, the boy employed by Luigi Pirolli’s uncles, had made a *marengo*, or 20 lire, for himself, which he declared to have sent to his mother in Pozzilli. AS Roma, *doc. cit.*, 5. Sources bear the mention of remittances via postal mandates by another musician from Filignano employing children, who was active in Normandy in the same years: see *Le Bonhomme normand*, 23.09.1887, “Mendicité lucrative”. For a review of the various modes of sending remittances used by Italians abroad, see Vittoria Ferrandino, *Banche ed emigranti nel Molise. Credito e rimesse ad Agnone fra Ottocento e Novecento*, Milan: Angeli, 2012, 22–6. On differences between genders, see Patrick Heiz, “Émigration et travail des enfants,” *art. cit.*, 86–7.

²²⁶ In the late 1860s, mass arrests had led to the expulsion of several hundred street musicians from Paris. In practice though, many repatriations had been of limited effect, and many had swiftly come back to France, even though their absolute numbers probably started to decline at that period. John Zucchi, *op. cit.*, 64–75.

²²⁷ Maria Rosa Protasi, “Al lavoro nelle vetrerie francesi: storie di bambini emigranti di Alvito di fine Ottocento,” *Giornale di storia contemporanea*, Vol. 6 (2003), No. 1, 3–31.

²²⁸ AS Isernia, Fondo Tribunale di Isernia II, Inventario degli Affari Penali, 1880-1943, Fascicoli penali, b. 223, fasc. 19, “Processo di Verrecchia Giacomo, Pascale Michele e Forte Nicandro,” 6.03.1893; ASC Pozzilli, lista di leva, classe 1888, Antonio Forte (Nicandro’s son was born in Lyon in 1888); Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 16.08.1901, audition of Nicandro Forte, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d’instruction No. 49750, 27.08.1901. Spanish *padrones* would take advantage of similar loopholes in Spanish law years later: see e.g. AHN, FC AUDIENCIA T MADRID CRIMINAL, 4, Exp. 33, “Rollo n° 420/1915 del sumario 355/1914.”

from Roccadarce, had been part of a gang of burglars for years before bringing young glassworkers to France.²²⁹ Another padrone would keep on committing various types of offenses in the Plaine once he left the child-supplying business.²³⁰

Vozza's charges were severely mistreated and undernourished. For months, however, the police and local court barely bothered him, in spite of an anonymous letter denouncing the children's appalling fate. Vozza only received dozens of fines for hosting the children without having requested the authorization for a *garni*.*²³¹ Three of the boys supervised by Vozza, malnourished, brutalized, and exhausted, eventually died of illnesses, which triggered a general outcry that had echoes in France, Italy, and even in the United States.²³² Remarkably, Pietro Carlo and Agostino Pirolli's story in Normandy was even recalled by the press to provide some genealogy to child exploitation by Italians.²³³ As a famous Italian diplomat and a former queen of Naples joined in the chorus, Vozza was arrested and tried in Italy. He was sentenced to only six months in jail, and to a fine he never paid. Although the ruling has been lost, it was certainly a testimony to the judges' uneasiness with a practice that remained generally consensual, and the difficulty of matching inadequate laws with the traffickers' misdeeds.²³⁴

²²⁹ AS Frosinone, b. 573, *doc. cit.*, 8.06.1895.

²³⁰ FNA, BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Joseph Carlesimo; Ernesto Schiaparelli, "Il traffico dei minorenni italiani per le vetrerie estere. Seconda inchiesta nelle vetrerie della Loira, di Parigi, Lione e Marsiglia. La liberazione di altri 130 fanciulli; condanne ed espulsioni di incettatori," in *Opera di assistenza degli Operai Italiani emigrati in Europa e nel Levante, Bollettino bimensile edito dal Consiglio centrale*, 28.02.1902, 17; AD93, 4U7/1010, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal c. Carlesimo Joseph, 28.03.1904; APP, CB 92.1, 1905/41, 3.01.1905; AD93, 4U7/657, 14.06.1907, Carlesimo c. Pirolli; 4U7/665, 24.04.1908, Deneufplanche c. Carlesimo.

²³¹ *L'Aurore*, 24.07.1898; AD93, 4U7/959; 961; 963; 966, subpoenas dated 19.05.1897, 19.07.1897, 21.09.1897, 23.11.1897, 27.12.1897, summoning M. Vozza ("Wozza") Donato, av. de Paris 87 and av. de Paris 100 (from November 1897) before the Tribunal de simple police for unauthorized *garni*; Commissaire de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbaux du 7.05.1897, 27.06.1897, 26.10.1897-19.11.1897 (25 times).

²³² *Le Radical*, *Le Matin*, 25.07.1898, *Le Petit Parisien*, 28.07.1898, *La Lanterne*, 29.07.1898, 1.08.1898; *La Stampa*, 4.08.1898, 23.08.1898; *The Washington Times*, 9.10.1898.

²³³ See *Le Petit Parisien*, 28.07.1898.

²³⁴ On the Vozza affair, see Giovanni Tassani (ed.), Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, *Parigi 1898. Con Zola, per Dreyfus. Diario di un diplomatico*, Bologna: CLUEB, 1998, 95–9; 105 (the former queen of Naples was Maria Sofia von Wittelsbach, in exile in Neuilly-sur-Seine); Ugo Cafiero, "I fanciulli italiani

The episode, which would capture imaginations to the point of inspiring a successful novel and even a feature film,²³⁵ established the glass factory's bad reputation for the years to come. And yet its decorated,²³⁶ well-respected owner quietly continued illegally employing underage minors. Whether such brutal treatment was representative of the fate of other children entrusted to *padroni** in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, and in the cités in particular, is less certain. Historians who have studied the traffic of young glassworkers from Italy have been perhaps overly influenced by those well-covered, most notorious practices, and by the main outside witnesses of the era, who uniformly framed them in tragic terms.²³⁷ For one thing, victims themselves seemed to have remembered a worse treatment from the French senior glassworkers than from Vozza himself.²³⁸

The Vozza episode certainly reverberated for quite some time, and had a distinctive impact, for example, on the context of Luigi Pirolli's arrival in the Plaine. As Giacinto

nelle vetrerie francesi. Relazione preliminare del Comitato piemontese. Inchiesta fatta nei circondari di Sora e di Isernia," in *Opera di assistenza degli Operai Italiani emigrati in Europa e nel Levante, Bollettino bimensile edito dal Consiglio centrale*, Vol. 1 (1901), No. 2, 1–22; Mario Enrico Ferrari, *art. cit.*, 103; Luigi Einaudi, Giuseppe Prato, "La liberazione di ottanta piccoli martiri, una santa crociata nelle vetrerie francesi," *La Riforma Sociale*, Vol. XI (1901), 1101. The archives of the Cassino tribunal where Vozza was sentenced were destroyed during the Second World War. Vozza's wife was also prosecuted in Paris for violences against one of the children who had died, but she was promptly discharged (AVP, DIU6 5661, Rôles du tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 1898, No. 15944, Ambassadeur d'Italie contre Vozza Marie, née Jacobelli, ordonnance de non-lieu, 16.08.1898).

²³⁵ Olimpia De Gaspari, *Il racconto del piccolo vetraio*, Turin, 1903 [reprinted many times at least until 1979]; Giorgio Capitani, *Il piccolo vetraio (film)*, 1955 (a picture of which is on the cover of this thesis). See Mariella Colin, "L'émigration des enfants italiens en France aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles entre la littérature et l'histoire," in Jean-Charles Vegliante (ed.), *Gli Italiani all'estero*, vol. 3: *Autres passages...*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 1990, 17–33.

²³⁶ See FNA, F/12/5190, Légion d'honneur, François-Théodore Legras.

²³⁷ Umberto Caperna, "La tratta dei minorenni ovvero il lavoro nero dei giovanetti ciociari nelle vetrerie francesi di Rive-de-Gier. Anni 1905 e segg.," in *Atti del primo Convegno di studi storici, Sora dall'antichità al nostro secolo (contributi e ricerche)*, Frosinone: Società Operaia di Mutuo Soccorso di Sora, 1987; Zeffiro Ciuffolletti, "Sfruttamento della manodopera infantile italiana in France alla fine del sec. XIX," in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Enrico Serra (eds.), *L'Emigrazione italiana in Francia prima del 1914*, Milan: F. Angeli, 1988, 249–57; Mariella Colin, *art. cit.*, 1990; Bruna Bianchi, Adriana Lotto (eds.), *Lavoro ed emigrazione minorile dall'Unità alla Grande guerra*, Venice: Ateneo veneto, 2000; Maria Rosa Protasi, *I Fanciulli nell'emigrazione italiana. Una storia minore (1861-1920)*, Isernia: Cosmo Iannone editore, 2010.

²³⁸ Mario Enrico Ferrari, *art. cit.*, 103. See also below, note 291.

and his sons had only been in the Plaine for weeks, in the summer of 1901, a sweeping inquiry by a labour inspector took place at the factory. It showed that of the 79 employment documents presented by Italian child workers, many did not correspond to their holder, and others had been established on the base of forged birth certificates.²³⁹

It seems that Giacinto and his sons barely escaped being caught red-handed. We know that the three of them were already in Paris in January 1901.²⁴⁰ At that point in time, Luigi had the required age to become an apprentice, unlike his younger brother Giustino. For his eldest, Giacinto obtained a regular booklet and Luigi was officially hired in the first days of February. For Giustino, Giacinto could have secured a booklet based on a counterfeit birth certificate, as we know he would for his other children several years later.²⁴¹ But he opted instead for making Giustino pass successively as two different nephews of his, named Augusto and Ferdinando, each time to make sure the boy's age was at least 13. We know these cousins of Luigi's had emigrated to America a year before, and Giacinto may have kept their original birth certificates before their departure. Asked about his age, the fake Ferdinando did quite well, but revealed his real date of birth to the inspector.²⁴² The need for secrecy must have been

²³⁹ *Le Matin*, 2.07.1901; FNA, F/22/452, M. Drancourt, inspecteur départemental du travail dans l'industrie, 1^{ère} circonscription, 12^e section, "Rapport à l'inspecteur divisionnaire Laporte," Paris, 25.07.1901; AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction n° enregistrement 49750, *doc. cit.* The investigation was part of an increased effort by the Labour inspection to enforce the law in glass factories: nationwide, 552 offences for unlawful age were discovered in that industry in 1901, against 223 the year before (see *J.O.R.F. Lois et décrets, partie non officielle*, 30.08.1902, 5910).

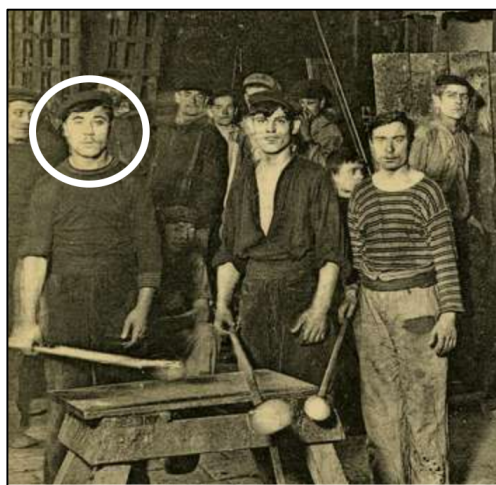
²⁴⁰ He made the required declaration at the Préfecture on 29.01.1901 (see reference in following footnote).

²⁴¹ APP, CB. 92.2, 1907/1310, 23.11.1907.

²⁴² To see through the entire imbroglio, see Commissariat de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal by M. Drancourt, 14.08.1901 about Louis and Ferdinando Pirolli in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction n° enregistrement 49750, *doc. cit.*; FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino Pirolli; Declaration of Intention in order to request U.S. citizenship, Ferdinando Pirolli, 16.09.1907 (accessible at https://www.atlanticlibrary.org/sites/default/files/immigration/1491809_pdf/00000309.pdf). Ferdinando and Augusto were the children of Antonio Pirolli, who had migrated to the U.S. with Giacinto in 1890. In Legras's registers, they were supposed to have left the factory on May, 26, 1901, although Ferdinando was supposed to have started on June 13 of that same year (see Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Procès de transport à la verrerie Legras, relevé sur les

drummed into Giustino by his father, as many decades later, he would still lie about his starting date at Legras, and pass over his stay at No. 100 in silence.²⁴³

When the census operations had taken place in the spring, the three of them were already working at Legras. Giustino's declared age was inflated, and unsurprisingly, the most frequent age of children in the cités was 14.²⁴⁴ It may well be that Giustino, and also youngsters like Luigi who actually had the required age, were let go during the summer of 1901 by Legras to assuage Labour inspectors. This would have marked one of the first episodes in Luigi and Giustino's lives in which a national identification as Italian translated into a tangible, and in that case adverse, consequence. A few months passed, the pressure decreased, and Luigi and Giustino could be hired again, after a possible round-trip to Pozzilli in the summer.²⁴⁵ Their new starting date would be October 7, 1901.²⁴⁶



registres de l'usine Legras des inscriptions concernant les enfants italiens, 19.08.1901, in AD93, 4U7/995, *doc. cit.*).

²⁴³ FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino and Antonia Pirolli.

²⁴⁴ SDMA, 1F24, Census, 1901, vol. II, 103–6.

²⁴⁵ Two distant clues supporting this hypothesis are to be found in FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Letter from Luigi Pirolli to the Préfet de police, 18.02.1927, in which Luigi wrote “I have lived in France since October 1901,” and to a mysterious passport lost in Turin train station in early July 1901, bearing the name Pirollo (*La Stampa*, 6.07.1901, “Oggetti trovati e consegnati alle guardie municipali”).

²⁴⁶ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Pirolli Louis.

Figure 9: Luigi Pirolli at Legras [no date, early 1900s]

The investigative material of the 1901 inquiry has fortunately escaped destruction.²⁴⁷ These pieces of information can be supplemented by an extensive police report of 1909, and yet another series of rulings and press reports, in 1912-1913, against some of the Spanish *padrones* who lived at No. 96 and No. 100, sentenced for child mistreatment.²⁴⁸ The social workings of the child-supplying business remained remarkably stable throughout the period.

The first part of the process was the procurement of children. Most of the contracts were agreed upon orally, but some were written. Those of Bernardo Greco, concluded for three years and signed before witnesses, provided that parents would receive “115 lire every six months. If children do not want to stay at Greco’s any longer or if the parents send for them, this sum stops being sent. If the father comes to fetch his children, he will have to pay 300 lire in damages. And if children fall ill for a month, they will owe an extra month of work at the end of the contract.”²⁴⁹ Other *padroni* offered families one lump sum upfront, which allowed them to better lure families and to pay them less in the end. A *padrone* active at No. 100 in 1897-1898 had offered the parents of a young boy from Arpino 200 francs to take him to France for two years.²⁵⁰ According to several converging accounts, in the early 1910s Spanish children under 12 were leased for 100 to 120 francs a year, older ones for 150 to 200 francs, sums

²⁴⁷ The file was sent to the justice of peace after the facts were deemed of insufficient severity to warrant a trial at the Seine correctional court. See AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d’instruction n° enregistrement 49750, M. Berr, 27.08.1901; M. Guillemain, 5.10.1901, “Faux et usage de faux, contravention à la loi du 2.11.1892,” c. Gallaccio et autres.

²⁴⁸ See AVP DIU6 1188, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 29.01.1913, 5.02.1913, Procureur de la république c. Pedro Rios Alonso, Cypriano Ruiz Ruiz, Jacintho Varona Gomez, Marcellino (sic) Lopez Sainz, Hermenegildo Sainz Garcia (sic), Alberto Lazo Gonzalez; D3U9 327, Cour d’appel de Paris (7e chambre), 29.05.1914; Cour de cassation, 23.10.1914 (attached to appellate ruling). See also *Journal du droit international privé*, Vol. 41 (1914), 926–31; *La Voix des verriers*, 20.01.1913.

²⁴⁹ Ugo Cafiero, “I fanciulli italiani nelle vetrerie francesi...,” *art. cit.*, 14. *Padrones* never liked parents to come unannounced, because then they could see for themselves their offspring’s living conditions and also ask around what the actual salary of their children was (see below, p. 237).

²⁵⁰ APP, CB 82.3 (Aubervilliers), 1898/856, 19.08.1898.

from which *padrones** deducted sizeable amounts under the guise of fines or unexpected expenses.²⁵¹

Physical abuses and brutality were not uncommon from the part of both *padroni* and *padrones*. The Vozzas, Carlesimos and Grecos, like their Spanish successor Jacinto Varona ten years later, barely fed the children and only provided them with a few rags, while making them write to their parents to pretend they were having a great time, and making excuses for not being able to send any money.²⁵² Vozza would beat his wards with belts.²⁵³ At No. 96, the place where Varona hosted his pupils was “appallingly dirty”; straw mattresses were rotten and the floor littered with garbage.²⁵⁴

Another child worker, under the watch of Greco at No. 100 in the early 1900s, would later tell his family of the terror that the *padrona* had caused him by harassing him constantly –for this superstitious child, this woman came across as a “witch.”²⁵⁵ Most traffickers eluded law enforcement as they could move to another glasswork town and get the children employed at another factory.²⁵⁶ The *padrones* convicted in 1913 did not serve their sentence, and carried on with their operations.²⁵⁷

²⁵¹ Léon Bonneff, “Les marchands de plaisirs,” in *L’Humanité*, 23.11.1912; AGA, AGA, 54/5.933, Contencioso (I), 2a parte, No. 3, “*Explotación de la Infancia, asunto llamado ‘Padrones’*,” Letter from the General Consul of Spain to the Spanish ambassador to France, 4.05.1912. The General Consul writes about a price ranging from 100 to 150 pesetas a year.

²⁵² A child working at Legras in 1912 was reported to have lost 12 kilos in 7 months (*La Bataille syndicaliste*, 5.12.1912). Varona’s apprentices were given only bread and water, and so undernourished one of them had to be hospitalized (AVP D1U6 1188, *doc. cit.*)

²⁵³ Ugo Cafiero, *art. cit.*, 8.

²⁵⁴ AVP D1U6 1188, *doc. cit.*

²⁵⁵ Int. Battista (No. 63), 21.07.2017. Mme Battista remembered this story about her great uncle Antonio Cacciarella. The Cacciarellas were among the children brought to France in September 1900 by Bernardo Greco, with the presence of their father to allow them to cross the border: see Ugo Cafiero, *art. cit.*, 13.

²⁵⁶ Once things had turned sour, Carlesimo left for Creil, north-west of Paris (Ernesto Schiaparelli, *art. cit.*, 17).

²⁵⁷ Varona went to a glasswork town in Normandy with almost three times as many children as before, while two of his fellow convicts offered their services in Corbeil, south of the capital. Three other *padrones* from No. 96 and 100 took their apprentices to glass factories of the Pas-de-Calais, the first two in Arques, the third one in Trélon. See AGA, 54/5.933, Contencioso (I), 2a parte, No. 3, “*Explotación de la Infancia, asunto llamado ‘Padrones’*,” Letter from the General Consul of Spain to the Spanish ambassador to France, 5.11.1913, and letter from Émile Tombarel, head of children control

Child-importers did well for themselves: one went on to buy a house in the Plaine, another a bar hotel.²⁵⁸ The latter, who had long started to improve his status back home, increased his level of respectability by securing a public contract to run the open-air market of the Plaine. He also attempted to obtain French citizenship, which eluded him at the last minute on account of his dubious reputation. In the meantime, he would not renounce the odd scams. Eventually, he went back to the *padrone* business, which attests to the enduring appeal of that particular trade.²⁵⁹

As early as 1890, a Spanish newspaper had reported that Spanish pedlars in Levallois could make up to 25 to 30 francs a day from their child employees; twenty years later, *padrones* at No. 100 with ten children under their watch, would have made at least 500 francs a month, of which only up to a third, in theory, had to be sent to families.²⁶⁰ Food and rent consumed an even smaller fraction of that income. One *padrón* paid less than 21 francs a month for his apartment, and even though the food he served his apprentices was decent, it would not have cost more than a few francs a week.²⁶¹ On top of that came the income from the biscuits, sold by children on Sundays

at the Comité de Défense des Enfants, section of Levallois-Perret, to the Spanish ambassador to France, 6.05.1914; SDMA, 1 F 27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 96 and 100 Av. de Paris; FNA, BB/11/8431, 26780 x 24, Ricardo Ruiz.

²⁵⁸ On the house bought by the first one, Hermenegildo Saíz, see APP, CB 92.21,1924/1282, 11.09.1924. For the other man, see following note.

²⁵⁹ Carlesimo's status in Casalvieri had switched from *contadino* to *industriante* (manager of a large estate) in the late 1880s: cf. ASC Casalvieri, 1886, births, No. 138, 5.11.1886, Gelsomina Carlesimo; 1889, births, No. 88, 9.05.1889, Adele Carlesimo; 1891, births, No. 47, 17.03.1891, Carlesimo Carlo. On the bar-hotel and its rent, see *La Lanterne*, 11.06.1903, "La Plaine-Saint-Denis"; AD93, 4U7/1010, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Procès-verbal du 28.03.1904 c. Carlesimo Joseph. On his role as provider of the market's equipment, see Formulaire de demande de naturalisation transmis par le ministre de la Justice au commissaire de police de Saint-Denis Sud le 7.03.1906 in FNA, BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Giuseppe Carlesimo. About the scams: he bought from one of his former neighbours at No. 100, Bonaventura Pirolli, a candy-making machine on credit, resold it for cash, and did not pay his debt in full (AD93, 4U7/657, 3.05.1907, 14.06.1907, Carlesimo c. Pirolli; 4U7/688-9, 13.01.1911, 27.01.1911, 31.03.1911, 14.04.1911, Frontisi c. Pirolli). Carlesimo was back in the child-supplying business in 1909 in Bas-Meudon: see AVP D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, 1^{er} Bureau, Rapport du sous-brigadier Girardier (copy), 27.12.1909.

²⁶⁰ *La Época*, 8.01.1890. Apprentices at Legras were paid 50 francs a month in those years, bonuses (0,5 franc per week) not included. See for instance: FNA, BB/11/3804, 4475 x 1900, Joseph Remen.

²⁶¹ AVP D2U6 168, Rapport Girardier, *doc. cit.* (Baltasar Gómez).

and in summertime, for Italian as for Spanish traffickers. The old activity was still very profitable. In the summer of 1909, Jacinto Varona made a profit of 1,500 francs from the biscuits sold in Brittany by his young glassworkers.²⁶²

And yet extreme cases were not the entire story. Some child workers under the custody of *padroni* or *padrones* seemed to have been treated almost fairly, if by no means comfortably.²⁶³ There is no evidence to suspect that in most cases, some money was not regularly sent to parents; on the contrary, we know that post offices in small villages of Cassinese handed families thousands of lire every year.²⁶⁴ Even Vozza was sending money to parents of his apprentices, 100 francs a year in one case, to a father who would later become a *padrone* himself.²⁶⁵ Clearly, some child-providers did not feel they were engaging in any illicit activity. An Arpino-native from No. 100 even appealed before the *Justice de paix** to enforce a child-leasing convention. He claimed that the children's father, who had arrived in town and requested to have his sons back, was not abiding by his side of the contract.²⁶⁶ Vozza himself clearly wrote in a letter to the judge: "*Non commisi truffe, perchè feci il contratto coi genitori avanti il sindaco di Roccasecca.*"²⁶⁷ Even French judges were conscious that the child importers had the blessings of the children's families, granting extenuating circumstances to Varona and his colleagues because of the "encouragement" they had received from the parents.²⁶⁸

²⁶² One biscuit ("*plaisir*" ou "*oublie*") sold for around 0.1 franc in 1907 (*Le Journal des confiseurs et pâtissiers*, May 1907, p. 145–7). Spanish children who started in glass factories in 1908–1909 were making between 2 and 2.5 francs a day (see AVP D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, 1^{er} Bureau, Rapport du sous-brigadier Girardier (copy), 27.12.1909, and also for the information about Varona).

²⁶³ See AVP D2U6 168, Rapport Girardier, *doc. cit.* This does not mean the children were not suffering from the working conditions, both at the factories and on the streets on Sundays.

²⁶⁴ Galeazzo Sommi-Piccenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia," in *Nuova antologia. Rivista di lettere, scienze ed arti*, Vol. 37 (1902), No. 723, 1.02.1902, 478.

²⁶⁵ Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 16.08.1901, audition of Jean Greco, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction n° enregistrement 49750, *doc. cit.*

²⁶⁶ AD93, 4U7/593, 18.10.1901, Loreto di Benedetto c. Ranaldi.

²⁶⁷ "I did not cheat anyone, because I established the contract with the parents in presence of the mayor of Roccasecca." Quoted by Luigi Einaudi, *La Stampa*, 26.05.1901.

²⁶⁸ AVP, D3 U9 327, Cour d'appel de Paris (7^e chambre), 29.05.1914; Zeffiro Ciuffoletti, "Sfruttamento...", *art. cit.*; Luigi Einaudi, Giuseppe Prato, *art. cit.*; Gabriele Napodano, "La tratta dei fanciulli italiani all'estero," *Rivista penale*, Vol. IV (November 1902), 497–506.

Both the leasing contracts and the counterfeit birth certificates were frequently secured with the complicity of officials in little Italian towns. That practice was anterior to the change of the French law regarding the workers' minimum age. Since Article 3 of the aforementioned Italian Act of 1873 prohibited the employment as a travelling musician of anyone under 18, even someone of one's own family,²⁶⁹ some were already accustomed to resort to fake documents. Even Luigi Pirolli's own father Giacinto might have done so at an early age.²⁷⁰ It was common to find amenable souls in town halls of the area to provide inauthentic documents, either out of kinship solidarity or in exchange for money or votes. The warmth of the support from the mayor of Pozzilli in the 1883 trials of Luigi's uncles suggests a strong bond between the Mayor and the Pirollis.²⁷¹ Other examples indicate that the cités' *padroni* stemmed from families that were particularly well-connected in their region of origin. Vozza's wife belonged to a family whose genealogical tree was loaded with members of the high clergy and public officials.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ "Anyone entrusting or giving away children under the age of eighteen within the kingdom, or guiding them abroad to entrust or give children to nationals or foreigners, and anyone who receives them to entrust them to another abroad for purposes of employment in wandering trades is liable to a jail sentence of six to twelve months and a fine of 100 to 500 lire." (translation from John Zucchi, *op. cit.*, 175).

²⁷⁰ An indication of this is the dubious changes to Giacinto's date of birth, moved back from 1858 to 1854. The birth registry where his birth is recorded is definitely that of 1858 (ASC Pozzilli, nascita, 1858, 15.10.1858, No. 7). In the ten-year table, the date, initially 1856, was rectified to 1858 in 1881. Then, from the 1880s onward, all his documents, Italian or foreign, would bear the year 1854. Maybe this forgery was part of an effort to escape military service, which his brother Agostino had already done (AD14, M3077, Étrangers, expulsions, 1877-1885, Notice individuelle, Pirolli Augustin, 29.04.1891). Born in 1858, Giacinto would have been registered on the draft lists in 1875, at age 17, and served for four years, between 1879 and 1883.

²⁷¹ AS Roma, *doc. cit.*, in particular page 73, a certificate of 10.03.1883 where the Mayor states that the Pirolli brothers are "incapable of taking children abroad to make them play music". On the role of the municipal authorities, see Angelo Filipuzzi, *Il dibattito sull'emigrazione. Polemiche nazionali e stampa veneta (1861-1914)*, Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1976, 341-44; Chiara Trara Genoino, "Suonatori ambulanti nelle province meridionali: archivi della polizia borbonica e postunitaria nell'Ottocento," *La Ricerca folklorica*, No. 19 (Apr. 1989), 69-75.

²⁷² See the Jacobelli entry on the website of the Sistema informativo unificato per le Soprintendenze archivistiche (<http://siusa.archivi.beniculturali.it>).

The other easy, and legally less risky option, did not require the officials' help. It consisted in carrying, as Giacinto Pirolli did for Giustino, documents that belonged to other children than those one was actually travelling with. That helped in particular *padroni* going out of Italy at the border, as children had to be related to the adult crossing with them. It also enabled their Spanish successors to blur the picture so much that even after an extensive investigation, the age and identity of some of the children could not be ascertained.²⁷³ Some of the *padrones*, however, did not bother as much as the Italians, and flouted the Spanish law by simply hiding the children among sacks of goods.²⁷⁴

The mastery of these methods was passed along within families. The practices developed by Agostino and Giacinto in their youth would later be reappropriated by Giacinto, and even by Luigi. Being particular about having all the necessary authorisations; appealing against rulings and administrative decisions; deliberately masking the truth; invoking poverty as an excuse; pulling political strings to influence the authorities.²⁷⁵ Despite the difficulty of actually retrieving evidence of this aside from similarities in practice, it is likely that the Pirolli brothers did in fact share – among themselves and also with friends and neighbours in Demanio – some of their migration know-how. Micro-practices emerged from their individual experiences,

²⁷³ A brother of the boy at No. 100 who perceived his *padrona* as a witch was employed with a document belonging to another brother. See FNA, BB18/6107, Affaire Cacciarella, En-tête de dossier au cabinet, Paris, N) 23, banal 1901, non daté: "Cacciarella (Clemente) 100 avenue de la plaine, à Saint-Denis." As for the *padrones* mixing up identities, see AVP, D3U9 327, Cour d'appel de Paris (7e chambre), 29.05.1914.

²⁷⁴ See the intervention of Gustave Rouanet in J.O.R.F. Débats parlementaires, Chambre des députés, 10.02.1914, p. 653–4. In Spain, strict regulations on emigration had also been passed in the early 1870s (Real ordenes, 5.07.1872, 30.01.1873, 8.08.1874, 21.08.1874), and were immediately tightened against *padrones* once the scandal of Saint-Denis and Aubervilliers broke out (Real orden, 18.11.1912). *Padrones* of children under 14 were liable to immediate incarceration (art. 1). If fathers had explicitly authorised the emigration of their children, an assessment would be made to see whether children had to be placed in foster care (art. 5). But financial sanctions were only applicable to fathers of minors under 7 years of age (art. 4).

²⁷⁵ Agostino Pirolli's file of his arrest in Normandy in 1891 includes the business card of the local member of Parliament, Auguste Engerand. A handwritten note on the back that suggests that the Député had asked the Préfet about the case, to make sure Agostino would not be deported. See AD14, M3077, *doc. cit.*

which helped mitigate future risks and improve success of their subsequent migration ventures.

The child workers' identifications were in part influenced by interactions with public institutions, which fostered identifications along national lines –a point we will address in the fourth chapter. However, the children's own systems of classification seemed to have primarily centred on gender and gang allegiances. While being a *padrone* usually meant being a demanding, sometimes violent patriarch or a very peculiar mother-like figure, being a *padrone*'s ward—or just an underage child worker—resulted in becoming a man much earlier than usual. The glass factory atmosphere undoubtedly contributed to Luigi and Giustino's gender construction. Knives, among male apprentices, were ubiquitous. Masculinity had to be displayed in fistfights, theft, and early female conquests.²⁷⁶ Local bands of *apaches** and factory halls shared some of their personnel.²⁷⁷ This made the possession of a weapon almost compulsory for self-defence purposes.²⁷⁸

Women were also part of the child import system. Apart from padrones' wives, children could be guarded by the odd independent *padrona*, like one who lived at No. 100 for many years.²⁷⁹ *Padrones* also had daughters who may have interacted with

²⁷⁶ On knives at the factory: APP, CB 92.1, 1905/113, 2.02.1905; CB 92.2, 1905/1199, 2.12.1905; CB 92.3, 1907/1369, 22.11.1907; guns: APP, CB 92.1, 1905/19, 6.01.1905; provocations and individual feuds: APP, CB 92.3, 1907/828, 11.07.1907; APP, CB 92.4, 1908/951, 10.12.1908, APP, CB 92.5, 1909/614, 14.07.1909; APP, CB 92.5, 1909/1159, 18.12.1909; a murder of a 19 year-old glassworker following a rivalry with another youngster over a 15-year old girl: APP, CB 92.11, 1915/152, 8.04.1915.

²⁷⁷ For an example involving members of the same family, see *Le XIX^e siècle*, 4.07.1894, "Double meurtre à Pierrefitte"; *JSD*, 3.02.1895; AVP, D3 U9 253, Seine Appeal Court, 15.02.1908, No. 3949.

²⁷⁸ This is at least how Luigi's own cousin Francesco Pirolli, arrested with both gun and knife in 1910, and Luigi himself, arrested much later with an automatic pistol in 1927, would justify themselves, as had many others before them. APP, CB 92.5, 1910/157, 26.02.1910; APP, CB 92.25, 1927/1622, 17.09.1927.

²⁷⁹ See Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 15.08.1901, audition of Dominique Ranaldi, in and AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction n° enregistrement 49750, *doc. cit* ("Mon livret... a été délivré à la 'padrone' chez laquelle j'étais en pension, Sabeth Tarsia"). Elisabetta Tarsia née Venditelli, a widow, was running the business herself, even though she lived with a man at No. 100 (see also AD93, 4U7/651, 21.09.1906, Verseaux c. Tarsia et [Di] Benedetto).

the boys, although we have yet to find a documented example of friendship or romance forged in that context. Child glassworkers smuggled into France were almost exclusively boys; girls, when exported, were mostly sent to work as servants or even as sex-workers.²⁸⁰ Many daughters of residents were made to work at Legras too, mostly in the decoration and packaging departments, but they were rarely brought to France for that sole purpose.²⁸¹

Transnational circulations of child-smuggling practices

Child import practices might have only been shared among members of the same origin-based communities, thereby reinforcing the relevance of ethnicity among their members. If this was true, the continuity observed from Southern Italians to Northern Spaniards would just be a case of formal similarities, deriving from a common history in wandering trades, an identical demand from factories, and an identity of material settings –the cités being one of them. However, the sources suggest the intervention of something else, which would have at once connected the child traffickers over the years and counterbalanced ethnicising dynamics: the transnational circulation of practices.

The most notorious child-recruiter for glassworks was, in fact, French. A priest from the eastern Pyrénées, Joseph Santol has left an enormous number of traces in the archives.²⁸² In 1899, despite a far from impeccable record in his native area, he founded

²⁸⁰ Patrick Heiz, “Émigration et travail des enfants,” *art. cit.*, 85–93. For Spain, see e.g. *Washington Post*, “Girls sold by parents,” 28.07.1908. Paulucci di Calboli reported, however, that a convoy of young girls had been brought to Lyon from Casavieri to work in glassworks (“La Traite des petits italiens en France,” *La Revue des Revues*, 01.07.1897, 402).

²⁸¹ On male-female ratios in the different units at Legras, see chapter 1. For an example of young girl from the cités working at Legras, see the case of 10-year-old Marie Stéphanie Picard (see below, note 314).

²⁸² In his native region, Santol had been involved in shady real estate deals that had upset both the locals and his hierarchy. Having left his parish in the early 1890s, he managed to secure a position in Paris as inspector general of a Catholic charity that federated rural orphanages. See i.a. “Requête présentée au Président du Tribunal civil de la Seine par l’Abbé Santol, prêtre, contre M. Lanoir, employé de chemin de fer, en mai 1895, par Me Fournier-Latouraille, avoué, 6.05.1895,” in *Factums*, nouvelle

in Paris a charity called *Le Placement familial*, to match young children from all over France with demand for labour in industry, agriculture and domestic service. His activity boomed rapidly to impressive levels. By 1905, his organisation had already placed 14,000 boys and girls, aged 6 to 18. Contracts signed with parents were similar to those in the mountains of Cassino or Burgos. Santol did not invent anything, as contracts of that sort had been used for decades.²⁸³ But he certainly popularised them all over France.

The clergyman resorted to various illicit practices, which increased the returns of his business.²⁸⁴ Extremely well-connected,²⁸⁵ “Saint-Santol” always managed to escape conviction, despite hundreds of complaints for various mismanagement practices, recurrent vitriolic accounts in the press and numerous probes opened by the authorities.²⁸⁶ His services remained attractive for many underprivileged families, and

série, 236, 6446-6480 (at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris); Abbé Santol, *Rapport sur le sauvetage de l'enfance par les orphelinats agricoles présenté à l'Assemblée générale des catholiques du Nord et du Pas-de-Calais le 20.11.1895 par M. l'abbé Santol, Inspecteur général des Orphelinats agricoles*, Lille: Victor Ducoulombier, 1896; on the Society, see Bruno Carlier, *Sauvageons des villes, sauvageons aux champs: la prise en charge des enfants délinquants et abandonnés dans la Loire (1850-1950)*, Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint-Étienne, 2006, 193–5.

²⁸³ For instance, in the case of young chimney sweeps from Savoie. See *Le Matin*, 4.08.1893.

²⁸⁴ His routine frauds included obtaining half-priced tickets from railway companies as a form of donation, while making families pay for the full price; and deducting food, dwelling and clothing from the child's salaries, despite being additionally paid for this by the employers. See AVP, D3U6 94, “Abbé Santol. Infraction à la loi sur les bureaux de placements,” 29.03.1905.

²⁸⁵ For the expression “Saint-Santol,” see *Le Réveil des Verriers*, 1.06.1910. His relations went to include a former President of the French Republic and even the Pope himself.

²⁸⁶ A trove of complaints is to be found in particular in AVP, D2U6 168, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, Abbé Santol, 26.10.1910. Just like his smaller scale Italian competitors, his widely understaffed organization did not care to ask nor even to notify the parents when their children would be displaced from one factory to another, and would be equally unbothered by the fate of those whose parents wanted them back or who decided to cease working. Many families were left to wait in anguish, and children often lingered for weeks before being sent home with the help of the authorities. See e.g. Report by the Quièvrechain gendarmerie, 21.11.1904, “Procès-verbal constatant renseignements sur la situation des enfants de la colonie de l'abbé Santol, placée à Quièvrechain (Nord),” in AVP, D3U6 94, *doc. cit.*; Report by M. Lehire to M. Coularou, 17.02.1917, in AVP, D3U6 175, Dossiers d'instruction, procédure ouverte le 21.03.1916 c. l'abbé Santol pour tenue illégale d'un bureau de placement; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/689, 3.06.1907. For yet another case in which Santol eventually escaped conviction, see AVP, D1U6 972, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, Procureur de la République c. Santol et autres, 13.08.1907, and D3U9 252, Cour d'appel de Paris, 31.01.1908, Santol c. Procureur de la République.

commendable for anyone who cared to take his blatant lies at face-value.²⁸⁷ Even a glassworker at No. 96 entrusted him with his 7-year-old child, naively hoping to spare the boy the hardship of working at Legras.²⁸⁸

Santol's role was critical in various ways. First, his placement scheme allowed factory owners like M. Legras to formalise child-recruitment practices developed with Italian *padroni*, and give them a veneer of respectability. With the blessing of glass and mining companies, Santol opened boarding-houses near major industrial sites. The one in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, of a capacity of 30 to 45 children aged 13 to 18, opened in 1905, a few hundred yards south of the cités, and was exclusively reserved to supplying Legras. In theory, Santol's children were somewhat better compensated than other minors,²⁸⁹ and the conditions at the house were decent, if not lavish. Discipline was tight, the bread rarely fresh, but the rest was satisfactory. If some of children left early, it was mostly because they were mistreated by other workers at the factory.²⁹⁰ A

²⁸⁷ See *JSD*, 5.06.1910.

²⁸⁸ Dossier Georges Blanrue, in AVP, D3U6 111, Santol. Girls could also be placed, with unfortunate consequences: another family at No. 96 had sent their 13-year-old daughter as a servant in a bourgeois household, only for the girl to be sexually assaulted by her master (APP, CB 92.5, 1909/573, 10.07.1909).

²⁸⁹ According to a deal made between the factory's management and Santol, each child under his watch received 60 francs a month, which was 10 francs more than other children at the factory, with the addition of the weekly bonus of 0,5 franc received by all children. Legras's need to retain his youngest manpower was visible in additional gratifications: if they stayed six months, Santol's apprentices would receive a lump sum of 20 francs; after a year, 50 francs; from the second year on, they would receive monthly bonuses of 3 francs in winter and 6 in Summer (see AVP D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, Rapport Girardier, *doc. cit.*). It seems that in some cases, Santol's organization would retain the entire salary of the children he provided Legras, leaving them only with the 0,50 franc bonus the factory gave to children every Sunday. See e.g. the testimony of Étienne Marcel Bertrand, born 1892, hired at Legras in August 1909 (AVP D2U6 168, *doc. cit.*), or that before a court in Chartres on 11.08.1906 by Louis Charles Eugène Poullain, father of a child employed at Legras from March to August 1905 (in AVP, D3U6 111, Dossiers d'instructions, Information pour détournement de mineure et complicité contre l'abbé Santol, terminée par un non-lieu 21.5.1907). The accounts of Santol's children placed in Creil glass factory between 1903 and 1905 confirm that children were effectively provided with only 2 to 4 francs *a month* (see AVP, D3U6 94, Dossiers d'instruction, information contre l'abbé Santol pour infraction à la loi sur les bureaux de placement, non-lieu, 29.03.1905).

²⁹⁰ AVP D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, Rapport Girardier, *doc. cit.*

longtime resident at No. 96 was among the senior glassworkers known to harass the young apprentices.²⁹¹

Santol's representative was handed the children's salaries, in addition to compensation for the boarding-house expenses.²⁹² In total, the Legras operations alone brought Santol, who visited the Plaine every Sunday, a revenue of about 30,000 fr. a year.²⁹³ This "industrial orphanage," as it was self-branded, allowed the glass factory to have a steady stream of children, whose treatment was entirely outsourced to someone else with a solid reputation. But Father Santol was barely different from *padroni*, and knew how to satisfy both families and factory bosses. He was caught and prosecuted for providing underage children with birth certificates of which they were not the rightful owners.²⁹⁴ In 1906, while his profits were on the rise, the dwellings inside the charity's building in Paris where children would be temporarily lodged before being dispatched to their destination were "hideously dirty."²⁹⁵ Santol's reliance on outward respectability was nothing unheard of among child-traffickers. Voza himself, as early as the 1890s, had founded a benefit society with another *padrone*, and had convinced the MP of Cassino to be the society's honorary president.²⁹⁶

The second key element of Santol's story is that Legras and his peers could benefit from a broad, international recruitment operation to fill the shortages in young manpower. Santol went to great lengths to source children directly in their provinces. His emissaries, whom he received routinely in Paris, were particularly active in

²⁹¹ AD93, 4U7/1024, Letter from M. Mirande, director of the Placement familial boarding-house, to the Commissaire de police de Saint-Denis Sud, 25.08.1906, about Philippe Wernert.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

²⁹³ *Ibid.*

²⁹⁴ He was eventually cleared on appeal because the penal code lacked a specific provision against this, and on account of "his honorability, his zeal, his sincerity and his disinterestedness," which prominent people had vouched for. AVP, D1U6 972, Cour d'appel de Paris, Procureur de la République c. Santol Joseph Thomas Paul, 13.08.1907.

²⁹⁵ Rapport Giardier on Santol, *op. cit.*

²⁹⁶ Galeazzo Sommi-Piccenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia," *art. cit.*, 468–9.

Brittany.²⁹⁷ In 1909, Santol started looking abroad.²⁹⁸ He travelled to Sicily, which had just been devastated by an earthquake, and after securing the support of the Pope himself, recruited about 200 children, and even managed to obtain free transportation for all of them. But some worrying information received by the Italian authorities about Santol eventually led them to block the project at the last minute.²⁹⁹ In Spain, Santol was active too. In the same years, he was already in league with a smuggler who offered illegal passage to Chile for Spanish emigrants.³⁰⁰ And by 1912, the “*bâtards à Santol*” started coming from the area of Briviesca and Cantabria, close to the area of recruitment of Legras’s *padrones*.³⁰¹

There is no direct evidence that Santol himself was ever in touch with the *padroni* and *padrones* of the Plaine-Saint-Denis. And yet some of his emissaries may have given ideas, in the mid-1900s, to local smugglers who were already taking children abroad to make them work as beggars and street performers. Another hypothesis is that Italians transmitted their know-how directly to their Spanish counterparts, by

²⁹⁷ In April 1905, a deputy from Morbihan denounced Santol’s practices in Parliament, noting that most Breton children, who had been promised 5 francs a month on top of board and food, often ended up with nothing and complained about being mistreated (*J.O.R.F., Débats parlementaires*, Chambre des députés, 11.04.1905, 1420).

²⁹⁸ Santol founded in 1909, at the same Parisian address as the *Placement familial*, another charity “*ayant pour but l’échange d’enfants entre divers pays d’Europe pour apprendre les langues, et aussi le placement dans le commerce de jeunes Français à l’étranger et d’étrangers en France.*” See Rapport Giardier, *doc. cit.* Before that date, Belgium had been the only foreign country on his map, both to place children and to seek refuge when the danger of prosecution became too high (see Report by Commissaire Parnet, p. 2, in AVP, D2U6 168).

²⁹⁹ ACS, Min. interno, Dir. gen. p. s., Div. polizia giudiziaria, 1910-1912, old number b. 291, fasc. 11900 F., “Emigrazione in Francia”; *Le Gaulois*, 11.01.1909.

³⁰⁰ Letter from the Commissario dell’Emigrazione to the Delegato generale per la Pubblica Sicurezza, 26.01.1909, in ACS, Min. interno, *idem*.

³⁰¹ See Philippe Picoche, *op. cit.*, 310–3. On the expression “*bâtards à Santol*,” see Charles Delzant, *Le Travail de l’enfance dans les verreries*, *op. cit.*, 12. After the Great War, during which the priest managed to secure free clothes and food from the U.S. Army, he was placed once again, fruitlessly, under investigation, and continued his operations unscathed. He even received a special mandate from the League of Nations to place some Polish and Russian children in France, which he did before dying in a car crash. See AVP, D3U6 196, “Information contre l’abbé Santol pour infraction à la législation sur les œuvres de guerre,” non-lieu, 7.01.1921; Abbé Santol, *Conférence donnée par M. L’Abbé Santol, directeur de l’Œuvre du “Placement familial” le 22 septembre 1922 dans le Jeanne d’Arc Home*, New-York, Molineuf: Imprimerie Saint-Paul, 1922; Forum des Images, VDP31900, “Actualités Pathé,” 18.10.1922; *Le Gaulois*, 6.02.1923.

recruiting Spanish children. In 1901 at a glass factory near Lyon, seven Spanish child workers were being exploited by a Casertan padrone, a case that may not have remained isolated.³⁰²

A third option is that it was actually the factories' managers themselves, at Legras and other similar companies, who engineered the child workers' recruitment schemes. They would have shared them with the different pools of child-importers, thereby providing the pivotal connection between groups and families of diverse backgrounds. Despite constant and largely successful denials, the management at Legras had, like their peers, a key role in the child-importation scheme. As opposed to other barons, the owners of the Plaine-Saint-Denis factory were careful never to strike a written deal with the intermediaries, except with Santol.³⁰³ And yet they probably offered them and the children's fathers a variety of incentives, such as subsidised trips to and from their native country, or even, as in the Lyon area, periods of free accommodation for each pair of children brought to the factory.³⁰⁴

In 1912, in the midst of the scandal that had broken out because of the fate of certain Spanish children, the director of the glassworks said to the press: "*je dois reconnaître que ces petits malheureux sont loin d'avoir un sort enviable, mais leur situation misérable vient des conditions dans lesquelles leurs traitants les élèvent... mais qu'y pouvons-nous ?*"³⁰⁵ A few days later, he was quoted as adding: "*Nous nous bornons à*

³⁰² Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia...", *art. cit.*, 465. The padrone was Giovanni Fraioli, from Roccasecca, married to Angela Mauroncelli (AD Loire, 1901 Census, Veauche, 35NUM 324 6M227, Cité Laurent, p. 30, house No. 18, household 102). He fled to Scotland after being suspected of a murder, was extradited to France but acquitted, and expelled to Italy (*La Lanterne*, 17.03.1903), before making his way back to Scotland (*Slater's Royal National Commercial Directory of Scotland*, 1907, 191).

³⁰³ AVP, Rapport Girardier, *doc. cit.*

³⁰⁴ Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia," *art. cit.*, 475–7. We know that Legras offered free travel to the Plaine to any boy willing to come on his own and who committed to six months of service (APP, CB 92.12 [unbound, in CB 92.27], 746, 5.10.1915).

³⁰⁵ *La Liberté*, 2.11.1912 ("I have to confess that these poor little souls [employed at our factory] are far from having an enviable fate, but their miserable situation derives from the conditions in which they are kept by those who raise them... what can we do about it?").

vérifier leurs papiers, nous assurer qu'ils ont bien l'âge légal... Souvent, nous avons tenté de faire quelques observations à ces trafiquants. Peine perdue. Ils sont les maîtres."³⁰⁶

These were only half-truths, to put it mildly. Traces of violations recorded by Labour inspectors survive in the archives, in the well-preserved files of the *Justice de paix**.³⁰⁷ When it came to child labour, inspectors were not as passive as other historians have suggested.³⁰⁸ Aside for the 1901 investigation,³⁰⁹ we found seven other procedures against Legras's management for underage labour, concerning 24 children.³¹⁰ This represented only a tiny fraction of the phenomenon, as most of the time children were swiftly hidden upon the inspector's arrival.³¹¹ One of the first children to be reported as underage was Rosario Verrecchia's son Émile, who was only 12.³¹² From all the surviving pieces of information, it emerges clearly that management knew fully well that children had not the required age. A resident at No. 100 put it clearly to the police: "*Sur la présentation des papiers d'identité, le directeur de l'usine*

³⁰⁶ *La Liberté*, 9.11.1912 ("We only verify their paperwork, to make sure they have the required age... Often, we have tried to make observations to those traffickers. To no avail. They are the masters").

³⁰⁷ Jean-Claude Farcy was apparently unaware of this. See "Archives policières: les répertoires des procès-verbaux des commissariats parisiens," *Recherches contemporaines*, 1998, No. 5, 20.

³⁰⁸ Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Nineteenth-Century France...*, *op. cit.*, 113, quoted uncritically by Bruna Bianchi, in "Percorsi dell'emigrazione minorile," Piero Bevilacqua, Andreina De Clementi e Emilio Franzina (eds.), *Storia dell'emigrazione italiana. Arrivi*, Rome: Donzelli, 2002, 360.

³⁰⁹ AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, *doc. cit.*

³¹⁰ AD93, 4U7/952; 985; 992; 993; 1002; 1021; Service de l'Inspection du Travail, 13e section de la Seine, reports on 20.04.1896, 16.07.1900 (inspector Brémond); reports on 8.05.1901, 2.10.1901, 2.10.1902, 10.10.1905 (inspector Drancourt); reports on 8.08.1901 (inspector Lefort). Not to mention other reports for infractions relative to the minimum rest between shifts and the prohibition of work on Sundays (AD93, 4U7/997, procès-verbal, 5.11.1901; 4U7/1002, procès-verbal, 7.12.1902; 4U7/1016, procès-verbal, 18.12.1904).

³¹¹ See *J.O.R.F. Lois et décrets, partie non officielle*, 30.08.1902, *Rapport au Président de la République...*, *op. cit.*, 5910. The practice was widespread and not confined to the glass factory: Ms. Thomas née Santambien remembers that her mother, who had started at age 11 at the Clerc toy factory at 121 Av. de Paris in the early 1910s, had told her that children were told to hide under the staircase whenever a Labour inspector came (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016).

³¹² AD93, 4U7/952, *doc. cit.*, and AVP, V4E 7717, 19th arr., 1883, births, No. 3110, 4.10.1883; another child in the same group, a Lorrainer living at No. 100, was also 12 according to his documents, but in fact was only 10 (AD57, 9NUM/8E166/2, Dabo, TD, 1873-1952, 1.08.1885, Florent Schvaller).

accepte les enfants, et le livret n'est fourni et déposé à l'usine que plus tard.*"³¹³ Luigi Pirolli's own brother Giuseppe, who started at the factory in late 1907 at age 11, was only inscribed on the factory's registers after his thirteenth birthday.³¹⁴

Repeatedly pleading ignorance and good faith, the glass factory's director would not hesitate to lie to inspectors³¹⁵ and change his versions on hiring dates from one year to the next.³¹⁶ As for the Legras family, who owned the factory, they had of course nothing to do with recruitment. All of this happened "*à leur insu.*"³¹⁷ But observers at the time were not fooled; bosses, *padroni* and parents had a common interest, exploit the child manpower.³¹⁸ That Legras was never sentenced infuriated socialists who even

³¹³ Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 16.08.1901, audition of Angela Reale née Quaglieri, in AD93, 4U7/995, *doc. cit.* ("Upon the presentation of identity papers, the factory's director hires the children, whereas the *livret** is only obtained and handed to the factory at a later stage.").

³¹⁴ FNA, 19770889/142, 15082 x 36, Giuseppe Pirolli; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1310, 23.11.1907. Legras routinely hired young glassworkers without *livrets**, and only later inscribed them officially on the registers –either when they obtained a fake one, or when they had turned 13. A 12-year-old Marne-born child from No. 100 was among those caught working at the factory in fully clandestine conditions (Émile Théodule Detante, in AD93, 4U7/992, Service de l'Inspection du Travail, 12e section de la Seine, PV du 8.05.1901 par Albert Drancourt, inspecteur; SDMA, 1 F 24, 1901 census, vol. 2, 100 Av. de Paris; AD93, 1E66/320, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1910, Vol. 1, No. 269, 7.05.1910). Censuses record the presence, in the mid-1890s, of other glassworkers under the age of 13 in the cités: the Paris-born Nicolas Walter, a 12-year-old resident at No. 98; at least one of his neighbours at No. 100, listed as a 13-year-old glassworker, who was only 12 at the date of the census; and a 11-year-old girl at No. 100 listed as *journalière**, who was in fact 10 (see SDMA, 1 F 21, 1896 census, vol. 2, 98-100 Av. de Paris; Louis Bréban, in SDMA, 1 K1/56; AD93, 1E66/152, Saint-Denis, births, 1885, No. 1097, Marie Stéphanie Picard).

³¹⁵ M. Roques, when facing a new inspector or police officer, would falsely affirm that he had never been prosecuted nor brought to trial before (see e.g. AD93, 4U7/1002, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal, 22.10.1902).

³¹⁶ For example, an Italian child worker from No. 100 named Dominique Tari was first claimed to have been hired in February 1900, and the next year his starting date was altered to June 1901. That way, he was exactly 13 according to the date of birth on his *livret**, based on a misleading birth certificate delivered in his native town in 1899. In fact, the boy had been born in 1890. Compare e.g. AD93, 4U7/985, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Audition of M. Roques, head of personnel at Legras, 8.08.1900, and AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, *doc. cit.*

³¹⁷ "*C'est à mon insu que cet enfant avait été embauché par un contremaître,*" said Charles Legras in Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, audition of 25.10.1905, in AD93, 4U7/1021 ("It was without me knowing that this boy had be hired by a foreman").

³¹⁸ Beatrice Berio, "I ragazzi italiani nelle vetrerie del Lionese," *Rivista coloniale*, Feb. 1913, 124-7. The diplomat Raniero Paulucci di Calboli was convinced that Voza was protected by Legras (see Giovanni Tassani (ed.), *op. cit.*, 96).

brought up the matter in Parliament –to no avail.³¹⁹ But the alert had been serious enough.³²⁰ In following years, the management at Legras and Mouton decided to take matters in their own hands and rely less on intermediaries.³²¹

And yet, as was the case with *padroni* and *padrones*, M. Legras's treatment of its workers was a complex mix of exploitation and paternalism. Aside from the first building in which Luigi's wife had lived, in 1881 the factory had built new housing units for their workers at No. 133, which accommodated 50 families in decent conditions.³²² An in-house pension system, which included a profit-sharing component, was quite generous, kicking in at 55 years of age.³²³ In the mid-1900s, 25 years at the factory would yield a pension of at least 480 francs, and possibly much more depending on the position.³²⁴ The factory paid bonuses to child workers and

³¹⁹ *J.O.R.F. Débats parlementaires*, Chambre des députés, session ordinaire de 1914, 10.02.1914, 653–4. Despite the scandals triggered by the Vozza and Varona affairs about fifteen years apart, the State remained extremely lenient with Mr. Legras, who had connections at the highest levels of government (FNA, F/12/5190, Légion d'honneur, François-Théodore Legras).

³²⁰ Enough for Charles Legras, the founder's nephew and an executive at the factory, to be denied his nomination into the Légion d'honneur. See F/12/8649, Légion d'honneur de Charles Legras.

³²¹ Sources suggest that starting in the 1910s, Legras and Mouton had envoys recruiting directly in French provinces (*La Correspondencia de España*, 4.06.1914; *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 23.04.1915; *L'Émancipation*, 24.06.1916; *Le Petit Journal*, 15.06.1925; Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge' ...," *op. cit.*, 104.). The factory extended its own boarding-house to gain more independence from intermediaries (AD93, 4U7/525, 28.02.1896, Beulaigne c. Legras et Cie; APP, CB 92.12 [unbound, in CB 92.27], 746, 5.10.1915). It also placed frequent advertising in the press for potential apprentices (e.g. *JSD*, 5.06.1913; 27.12.1914; 21.03.1915).

³²² FNA, LH/1562/64, François-Théodore Legras. A number of residents ended up living there over the years (see chapter 1, note 87).

³²³ Unions were quick to point out, however, that few made it to that age, either for health reasons or because they were laid off. See Département de la Seine, Direction des Affaires départementales, *État des communes à la fin du XIX^e siècle, publié sous les auspices du Conseil général. Saint Denis. Notice historique et renseignements administratifs*, Montévrain: Imprimerie typographique de l'école d'Alembert, 1902, 283–5; *La Voix des verriers*, 1.07.1912 "La Viande à feu. Un bain capitaliste à deux pas de Paris. La verrerie Legras et Cie. Deux accidents récents. La vie des verriers. L'exploitation des 'gosses'." In 1903, at Legras's in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, there were only 19 workers out of 862 who were 45 or older (Charles Benoist, "Le travail dans la grande industrie," *art. cit.*, 191).

³²⁴ Louis Beaudouin, a former resident at No. 100 who had joined the glassworks in November 1891 at age 9, received an annual pension of 561.99 fr. in 1922 (SDMA, CT127, Letter from the Préfet de police to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 5.09.1922; CT111, Letter from the Préfet de la Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 24.11.1922; 1F21, 1896 census, vol. 2, 100 Av. de Paris). By comparison, another former resident who after his glass-working years had become municipal street cleaner received a pension of less than 200 francs after 16 years in his job (SDMA, CT151, Commissions municipales, 2.03.1910, pension of Joseph Bour).

compensated everyone for the high costs of living. For a resident at No. 96 in the early 1920s, that indemnity amounted to 10% of his basic income.³²⁵ Legras was also among the instigators of the workers' cooperative "La Famille."³²⁶ Even recreational activities like playing music and singing, which were popular in the cités, were partly sponsored and controlled by factory bosses.³²⁷

For all these paternalistic advantages, Legras and some other factories in the Plaine which were similarly generous –Mouton offered for instance an extra allowance for workers who had five children³²⁸– maintained for decades privately run, often illicit schemes of manpower importation. Those rested on a set of practices that some residents benefitted from, and from which another number of those suffered to varying degrees. Moreover, these schemes had an impact on the cultural representations through which residents viewed themselves and others. This happened in two principal ways.

First, by contributing to the diverse, multi-origin make-up of the cités, which resulted in part from legal changes, resounding scandals and judicial decisions.

³²⁵ FNA, BB/11/7863, 10084 x 22, Luigi Gabriele. For another example, see Certificate signed by J. Chaudron, director of the Saint-Denis glass factory, 26.06.1925, in APP, IA 169, Filippo Quagliari et Maria Rea (compensation of 2 fr. on top of a 23 fr. daily salary).

³²⁶ See chapter 1, note 61.

³²⁷ For residents who could play an instrument, see SDMA H 27, 1893, and AVP, D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1687, Jules Célestin Long; D4R1 490, 1887, No. 2968, Auguste Fischer (member of the glass factory's band – instrument unknown); D4R1 1295, 1905, No. 1979, Pierre Cochonneau (trumpet and bugle); D4R1 1558, 1910, Édouard Jacques Kirschner (bugle); D4R1 1507, 1909, No. 4428, François Kuntz (cornet); D4R1 1668, 1912, No. 4966, Gabriel Mapps (clarinet). For want of sources documenting membership, it is hard to know if, and at what period, Italians and Spaniards joined the *Fanfare de la Plaine*, founded in 1874, the *Harmonie de la Verrerie*, founded in 1887 at Legras, or the merger of the two from 1899, called *Harmonie de la Plaine* and led by a head of division at Legras (see Alfred Martin, *Le Guide de Saint-Denis*, Saint-Denis: Marchal, 1889, 93–4; SDMA, CT127, Letter from the Préfet de la Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis about M. Jullien, 24.05.1922). Mouton also had a brass band (SDMA, 21 S 055 002, Private papers of René Louis Abel Tissot (1889-1912), feuillet No. 8, 1). Residents also performed music and theatre at the local parish (see the Winckler brothers, Fischer, Devaux, and Stéphanus in Archives of the Seine-Saint-Denis diocese, 25.1.8, 3F, 21010, Patronage Sainte-Geneviève, 145 av. de Paris, séance récréative, dimanche 12.05.1904).

³²⁸ SDMA, CT45, Letter from the Director of the Società Italiana di Beneficenza to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.02.1922 (Puzzuoli family).

Casertan and Molisan children replaced French child workers; Northern Spanish padrones supplied a new, less immediately suspect manpower after the VoZZa scandal, and filled the shortages Santol's supply alone was unable to make up for.³²⁹ At the time when the most ruthless *padrones* were finally caught in 1912, 54% of the children officially aged 13-18 at Legras's were Spanish, and only 2 % Italian.³³⁰ Given the opprobrium brought upon the Spaniards by Varona and his peers, families and child importers of yet another origin might have joined the mix as well, had the Great War not broken out. The drastic reduction of glass production during the conflict and subsequent progress in mechanisation progressively reduced the demand for child workers.

Second, the perceived status of Spanish and Italian residents may well have been adversely affected by the scandalous living conditions experienced by some of their young countrymen. This is what the General Consul of Spain was concerned about in 1912, when he referred to the padrones and “*el descredito que lleva consigo la extensión y ejercicio de profesion tan abyecta para los demás compatriotas que viven de un trabajo honrado.*”³³¹ However, the arrival of newcomers who were to take an even lower position on the social ladder may have helped alleviate this phenomenon in relative terms. The regular influx of new immigrants seems to have generally benefitted, socially and symbolically, residents of previous migration waves, by providing a contrast to the position of their predecessors. This aspect will be one of the final considerations of this chapter, centred on the perspective of those who did not move.

³²⁹ The Assistance publique (i.e. the public service of foster care) would also supply young children to industrial barons, before the practice receded in the 1900s. See Léon Bonneff, Maurice Bonneff, *La Vie tragique des travailleurs: enquêtes sur la condition économique et morale des ouvriers et ouvrières d'industrie*, Paris: J. Rouff, 1908.

³³⁰ Marie-Françoise Michel, Jean-François Michel, Dominique Vitrat, Jean Vitrat, *François-Théodore Legras. Verrerie artistique et populaire française*, Saint-Denis: Deux-Ponts, 2012, 77.

³³¹ Letter from the General Consul of Spain to the Spanish Ambassador to France, 12.07.1912, in AGA, 54/5.933, Contencioso (I), 2a parte, No. 3, Explotación de la Infancia, asunto llamado “Padrones” (“... the discredit brought by the expansion and practice of such a despicable profession upon their countrymen who make an honourable living”).

2.3. Staying put when others are on the move

In parallel to migrations happening to, within, and from the cités, the residents' lives were affected by a different type of space-related changes, united by their common, largely deceptive characteristic of spatial standstills. Departures or arrivals of others, whether at the point of origin or in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, had the potential to alter people's living conditions, and also their social status and cultural identifications. In addition, things, words and ideas circulated across regions between people. They have to be taken into account in order to complete the assessment of the impact of movement on the residents' identifications.

Migrants and non-migrants

Migrations were key in shaping relations between those who left and those who did not. Although many women migrated to the Plaine and to the cités with their families, or even on their own in some instances, some temporarily stayed at home, and others never came. "Partial societies," as some scholars have called them, emerged in French provinces, Extremadura or Terra di Lavoro, in which men were absent, working in the distant Plaine-Saint-Denis and elsewhere.³³² In the Merindades de Burgos, between 1910 and 1914, more than three times as many men as women emigrated.³³³ But even when, and often precisely because, they had not taken part in previous journeys, many women had developed –like Luigi's mother and aunts³³⁴– the necessary skills to run

³³² Dionigi Albera, Patrizia Audenino, Paola Corti, "I percorsi dell'identità maschile nell'emigrazione. Dinamiche collettive e ciclo di vita individuale," *Rivista di storia contemporanea*, Vol. 20 (1991), No. 1, 69–87.

³³³ Consejo provincial de fomento de Burgos, *Estadística emigratoria de la provincia: causas principales de la emigración y medios para que disminuya*, Burgos: Imprenta de Agapito Díez y Compañía, 1914. The figures for the district of Villarcayo are the following: 451 men, 138 women, 85 children.

³³⁴ For instance, Agostino's wife Francesca delivered Luigi Pirolli's little sister Emilia in 1905. Both were at once sisters and sisters-in-law (ASC Pozzilli, Pirolli Emilia di Giacinto, 1905, births, No.3, 13.01.1905).

the farms on their own, support each other, and thereby enable the migration of male members of their household.³³⁵ The fact that Luigi Pirolli's mother Maria Carmina seems to have resented not being involved in some of Giacinto's migration decisions, suggests she usually had her say in these matters, even when she was not taking part.³³⁶

In certain cases, children were left behind without either of their parents, which points to the participation of the broader family circle in the migration project. A resident from same village as the Pirollis had his wife and three sons with him in the Plaine, and three others in Italy. One of them had been born in Lyon, but was now growing up in the village, attending school in Demanio with Luigi's younger brothers.³³⁷ He may have reunited with his parents at a later stage. In the meantime, his childhood was one in which migration was still playing a central part, not only through his first memories of travel, but also because his parents and some of his siblings were far away. We can only speculate on the consequences of this for him, which could be positive –through money, status, or the freedom of being outside the direct control of his parents– and negative –due to the absence of relatives and the frustration of being left out.

At times, residents planned to leave but did not. At the beginning of our period, a resident from Lorraine made plans to emigrate permanently to New Caledonia; three others were keen on Tahiti or Diego-Suárez. They may or may not have made it, but

³³⁵ See for southern Italy, Igino Petrone, *Il Sannio moderno (Economia e psicologia del Molise)*, text of a lecture at the Dante Alighieri society on 27.02.1910, Turin: G.B. Paravia & Co, 1910, 30. Also, Edilio Petrocelli (ed.), *La Civiltà della transumanza. Storia, cultura e valorizzazione dei tratturi e del mondo pastorale in Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, Campania e Basilicata*, Isernia: Cosmo Iannone, 1999, and Emilio Franzina, "Donne emigranti e donne di emigranti. Memorie e scritture popolari dell'emigrazione femminile italiana fra i due secoli," in *Annali dell'Istituto Alcide Cervi*, Vol. 12 (1990), 237–63. For the valleys of northern Spain, where women often followed their husbands on the road, see Susan T. Freeman, *The Pasiegos*, *op. cit.*

³³⁶ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016. Emelia Pirolli remembered a time, probably in the 1910s, when Giacinto decided to go on a trip to America from Saint-Denis without consulting his wife, which provoked the ire of Maria Carmina.

³³⁷ Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, procès-verbal of 16.08.1901, audition of Nicandro Forte, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, *doc. cit.*; ASC Pozzilli, lista di leva, classe 1888, Antonio Forte, born in Lyon on 4.02.1888.

it certainly shows that the Plaine-Saint-Denis did not fulfill their dreams of fortune.³³⁸ Decades later, a resident at No. 100 was invited by his uncle, a rich farmer in the United States, to come and settle there with his wife. He applied for a visa, before finally changing his mind.³³⁹ As for refugees of the Great War, many lived in the hope of a quick return to their place of birth, which they were prevented from by the conflict. When it was possible again, the choice of some to not go back home pitted them against their relatives, who could view this as a form of betrayal.³⁴⁰

Such aborted migration projects and decisions to stay put raise difficult questions. Not only about the residents' sense of belonging in the Plaine, but also about the intensity of their translocal ties,³⁴¹ both with their region of origin and with relatives in other emigration destinations. The unaccomplishment of re-emigration projects could be the consequence of stronger connections with people in the Plaine, than with relatives in other destinations. But the process may have worked the other way around, with people settling in because their projects of return or re-emigration did not come to fruition. It is in fact probable that a number of residents kept their options open and

³³⁸ FNA, BB/11/1981, 2472 x 87, Florent Fixari ("Fiscari"), Report from M. Bouteille, Commissaire de police de Saint-Denis-Sud, 13.04.1888; SDMA CT84, Courriers à l'arrivée, 1887-1889, Letters from the Head of the First Division of the Administration des colonies, Ministère de la Marine, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 26.12.1887, about Pfister (av. de Paris 100), Anton (av. de Paris 100), and Idoux (102 av. de Paris).

³³⁹ See Note de transmission du bureau du sceau, 1928, in FNA, BB/11/11264, 77542 x 28, Costantino Gio Batta Orsi. As the daughter of another couple of residents who contemplated departure to the U.S. in 1948 remembered: "*on s'est dégonflé, mon père a eu peur. Et finalement on a regretté.*" (Int. Rongione, No. 28, 2.12.2016 – "we chickened out, my father got scared. And then we regretted it").

³⁴⁰ See "Réfugiés!," in *Blog des archives de Saint-Denis*, 22.08.2014, available at <http://archives1418.ville-saint-denis.fr> (last accessed 10.05.2018). The Belgian refugees who decided to stay in France were many (see Michael Amara, *Des Belges à l'épreuve de l'Exil. Les réfugiés de la Première Guerre mondiale: France, Grande-Bretagne, Pays-Bas, 1914-1918*, Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2014, 2nd ed., 366–8). On refugees in general, see Philippe Nivet, *Les Réfugiés français de la Grande guerre, "Les Boches du Nord,"* Paris: Economica, 2004, 84–7; Annette Becker, *Les Cicatrices rouges, 14-18, France et Belgique occupées*, Paris: Fayard, 2010, 53–82.

³⁴¹ Here we prefer "translocal" over "transnational," to overcome the methodological primacy of the national geometry. On this point, see Clemens Greiner, Patrick Sakdapolrak, "Translocality: Concepts, Applications and Emerging Research Perspectives," *Geography Compass*, Vol. 7 (2013), No. 5, 373–84.

never abandoned either the possibility of a return home at some stage, or of a secondary migration to other shores. Indications suggest that many stayed in-between.³⁴²

As for Luigi and Maria Pirolli, they had relatives in Italy, Philadelphia, and later Algeria and South America, where two of Luigi's brothers emigrated. We have mentioned their possible plans to retire in Pozzilli at a later stage, or at least to go there on vacation. They may, as well, have kept the American option at the back of their head. And yet as life in the Plaine became increasingly favourable to them in the interwar period, they had little incentive either to go back or to seek another future elsewhere. Once they acquired citizenship and their daughter married a police officer in Paris, re-emigration or return became more remote possibilities.³⁴³

Departures and arrivals of others

Whether people thought of moving again or not, the disappearance of others from the place of immigration was also something to be reckoned with. Towards the end of the Great War, for instance, the departure of people temporarily brought to the Plaine by the conflict could disrupt the residents' networks and alter their identifications. In a matter of months, a Greek from Anatolia named Emmanuel Scopelidis –who had left alone for France in 1915 after a year in Lesbos–, was deprived of the presence of a Greek bar-owner at No. 96, as well as of many of his fellow nationals who had been working at the local gas factories. These departures, combined with his own marriage to a French woman and the fact that his native island had been conquered by Turkey,

³⁴² For instance, a longtime resident at No. 100 who had gone back to Italy during the Great War after growing up in the cités, came back in 1920 and dodged the Italian draft. A few years later however, as he pursued a career in the metal industry in the Plaine and got more and more involved in its social life, he would periodically visit his Italian hometown, where he kept an address and worked as a carpenter. See APP, CB 92.4, 1908/611, 15.06.1908; SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, 100 Av. de Paris; AD93 D2 M8205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census, 100 Av. Wilson; AD93 D2M891, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 100 Av. Wilson; SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census, 100 Av. Wilson; ASC Pontecorvo, Schede individuali, Silviano Zonfrilli; Liste di leva 1901-1903, 1901, No. 178; SDMA, 5 Q 61, Société de secours "la Mutualité" de la Plaine Saint-Denis, No. 461.

³⁴³ Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016; SDMA E 334 Saint-Denis, births, 1905, vol. 2, No. 1409, 12.11.1905.

certainly made his integration into his new context more necessary.³⁴⁴ Which is not to say that the process was easy.³⁴⁵

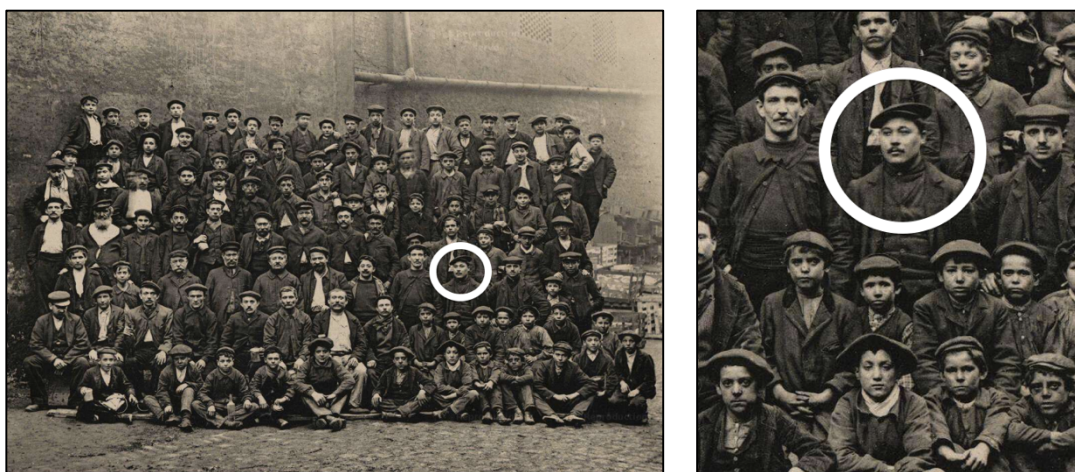
Meaningful identification dynamics also resulted from the arrivals of others to the Plaine and the cités. As historians have pointed out at a broader level, newcomers had to integrate into a population that was also made of migrants who themselves were fighting for their social status.³⁴⁶ In that sense, new arrivals could make socio-cultural boundaries shift. Luigi Pirolli's story is once again illustrative of this point. As mentioned earlier, by 1913, Luigi's position at the factory had improved, along with that of Giustino and one of their childhood friends.³⁴⁷ Despite the fact that neither Luigi's father, nor his youngest brothers would never make as far up as they did, the Demanio nucleus may well have enjoyed, in the process, a less foreign, or at least less Italian, status at the factory. All the more so, since the ones who were now looked down upon for their dismal appearance and their inability to speak French were not Italian, but Spanish. On the following picture, which based on Luigi's features can be dated from the late 1900s, early 1910s, the contrast between him and the children at the forefront is striking: Luigi does not belong to the most miserable fraction of the factory anymore.

³⁴⁴ FNA, 19770894/2, 28280 x 37, Emmanuel and Marie Scopelidis; Int. Scopélitis (No. 68), 24.07.2018; APP, CB 92.16, 1919/707, 2.10.1919.

³⁴⁵ One of Emmanuel's Greek neighbours, who had also married a French woman whom he had first met in 1915 before going back to Greece for another three years, left once again with her to Athens in 1919. This can be interpreted as suggesting that his opportunities and support-system were more developed in his native country. And yet these issues were never settled for good: in 1920, the couple was back in the Plaine again. FNA, BB/11/12413, 25481 x 29, Kyriacos and Louise Rallis; APP, IA 171, No. 15173, Époux Rallis; AD93, 1E66/279, Saint-Denis, births, 1918, No. 1019, 16.12.1918.

³⁴⁶ Alain Faure, "Une génération de Parisiens à l'épreuve de la ville," in *Bulletin du Centre d'histoire de la France contemporaine*, No. 7 (1986), 157–73; Jeanne Gaillard, "Les migrants à Paris au XIX^e siècle. Insertion et marginalité," *Ethnologie française*, Vol. 10 (1980), No. 2, 129–36.

³⁴⁷ See above, note 119; chapter 3, note 57.



*Figure 10: Luigi Pirolli among his co-workers at Legras
(no date, late 1900s-early 1910s)*

For Luigi then, who now went by the name of Louis and very probably had some of the young Spanish children as subordinates, a dynamic combining class distinctions and inter-ethnicisation may well have contributed to “francise” him at that period.³⁴⁸ The young Spaniards were growing in the same conditions in which he had grown up ten years earlier. They were to him what he had been for Bretons and Alsatians at the factory— a contrasting presence, in relation to which he appeared all the more local and well integrated.

That pattern is comparable to the processes that historians of whiteness have identified in the American context, although it would not exactly fit as such in the Plaine.³⁴⁹ A more accurate framework to reflect these hierarchy displacements is the insightful vision of Norbert Elias on the established and the outsiders: a power balance is reached between the two groups through interdependence, the former needing the

³⁴⁸ On inter-ethnicisation, see Rudolph J. Vecoli, “An Inter-Ethnic Perspective...,” *art. cit.*

³⁴⁹ See in particular David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, London, New York (NY): Verso, 1991; Thomas Guglielmo, *White on Arrival: Italians, Race, Color and Power in Chicago, 1890-1945*, New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 2003; David Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White*, New York (NY): Basic Books, 2005.

latter to enhance its standing.³⁵⁰ Incidentally, from a labour control standpoint, this mechanism is likely to have played a role in Legras's ability to maintain, over the decades, a very low level of unionisation and strikes.³⁵¹

During the Great War, the new political and demographic context of the Plaine made ethnonational boundaries shift once again. At the glass factory, the vast majority of Luigi's Alsatian and Lorrainer colleagues had recovered their French citizenship in the last decades of the 19th century. But still, bearing a German-sounding surname was certainly unpropitious and could have enhanced, by contrast, the relative status of the Pirollis.³⁵² In early August 1914, based on the false rumor that certain dairy shops belonged to a German-owned company, an angry mob deprived the Plaine children of three out of seven such outlets for several weeks, including the one at No. 96.³⁵³ The anti-German hatred remained strong in Saint-Denis, as elsewhere, for many months.³⁵⁴

In addition, refugees arrived from Belgium and Northern France, fleeing the German advances and subsequent occupation.³⁵⁵ At Nos. 96-102, sources indicate the sojourn over the course of the hostilities of at least 57 people officially registered as wartime refugees.³⁵⁶ For some of them, it was far from being their first migration. A

³⁵⁰ Norbert Elias, "Introduction: A Theoretical Essay on Established and Outsider relations" [1976], in Norbert Elias, John L. Scotson, *The Established and the Outsiders*, Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage, 1994 (2nd ed.), xxx-xxxii.

³⁵¹ See chapter 4, p. 355-6.

³⁵² See chapter 4, p. 388.

³⁵³ APP, CB 92.11, 1914/594, 4.08.1914; 1914/685, 2.09.1914; SDMA, CT352, Letter from Ms. Esther to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 10.08.1914; SDMA, 4 H 3/223, "Laiteries de la Plaine-Saint-Denis," 26.11.1918; and the description, in the case of Clichy, by Alphonse Désormeaux, in *Clichy pendant la Guerre*, Paris: Le Livre d'histoire, 2009, 7-8. On the anti-German atmosphere in the Plaine in the first days of the war, see SDMA, 4H3/3, Letter from Louis Kirsch, chairman of the Grands Économats parisiens, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 3.08.1914.

³⁵⁴ See e.g. *JSD*, 18.06.1916.

³⁵⁵ In February 1915, registered refugees were already about 900 in the Plaine, and in mid-May 1915, their number had doubled (APP, CB 92.11, 1915/51, 2.02.1915; APP, CB 92.11, 1915/273, 15.05.1915).

³⁵⁶ See SDMA, CT1328, "Belges. 1918-1919"; H 41, Military registers, 1918, Lancelon; SDMA, CT1003, "Guerre de 1914-1918, Réfugiés du Pas-de-Calais, état des réfugiés," no date; CT223, List of refugees summoned to city hall for work, no date [1918]; CT1328, "Répertoire. Réfugiés. 1919"; AD93, AD93, D7 42-9, Secours aux réfugiés, 1915-1920.

man in his sixties had been born in Tuscany, settled in the North of France in 1880 where he had worked for decades at a chemical factory, and twice married French women.³⁵⁷ For the other inhabitants of the cités, he and his wife must have been defined primarily by their status as refugees and the benefits they received, which were likely to trigger some jealousies.³⁵⁸ From that couple's perspective, on the other hand, they may have felt less foreign than their new Casertan or Extremaduran neighbours. First, the woman had been born in France, and had always lived there. Second, the husband's longtime presence in the country, along with the pair's experience as refugees, must have led them to feel much closer to the other families from the Northern regions than with their foreign neighbours –even though some were, on paper, their fellow Italian nationals.³⁵⁹

Another refugee who moved in at No. 96 with his nephews and nieces, whose father had been killed on the front, had no reasons to feel he did not belong there, because it was in fact a return to the Plaine.³⁶⁰ And yet he was still technically a German national,

³⁵⁷ AD93, 4U7/1037, Préfecture de police, Service des étrangers, procès-verbal of 29.06.1921 about Louis Cavecchia; AD93 D2 M8205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census, p. 295 *sqq.*; SDMA, CT1328, "Répertoire. Réfugiés. 1919"; AD02, 5Mi1709, Chauny, 1894, No. 253, birth, 5.06.1894; AD02, 5Mi1711, Chauny, 1901, marriage, No. 374, 27.07.1901.

³⁵⁸ See chapter 4, p. 389.

³⁵⁹ Their case was not isolated. Another couple from Nord who arrived at No. 100 in 1918 was formed of a Swiss-born husband from the Italian-speaking part of the canton of Grisons, and a Belgian-born wife, who had been living in France for at least 20 years (AD59, 3E 9438, Jeumont, marriages, 1898, No. 1, 8.01.1898; AD93, D7 48, Secours aux réfugiés, Horgnies, 18.03.1919). This sort of complex identifications would take shape in a similar way for Luigi and Maria Pirolli as they became refugees themselves in 1940 and lived through the trauma of the "Exode" (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016).

³⁶⁰ An Alsatian in his fifties, he came from Chauny, the same industrial town in Picardie as his Tuscan-born neighbour. Having moved to Amiens in the early 1880s where he had worked in the weaving industry and married a local woman, he had served for several years in the Foreign Legion. He had then headed, in mid-1899, to the Plaine-Saint-Denis with his family, reuniting with his sister and brother-in-law, who was working at Legras and had probably secured for him the stoker position he had taken there upon arrival. Only a year into his first stay in the Plaine, however, his wife had died during childbirth. This had prompted to make his way back to Picardy, probably to be able to raise his young children with the support of his in-laws. Working in the chemical industry, he was cast on the road by the Great War, and moved to the very same address in the Plaine where he had been living 20 years earlier. SDMA, CT145, Letter from the Préfet of the Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 15.01.1919, about M. Faath; CT1328, "Répertoire. Réfugiés. 1919"; MA Amiens, 2E931, marriages, 1884, No. 442, 3.11.1884; SDMA, E307, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1899, No. 993; E308, Saint-Denis, births, 1900, No. 326; E312, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1900, No. 631; SDMA, 1F24, 1901 Census, 16 rue Trézel; AD93, 1E66/334,

and up to the end of the war he had to deal with suspicious authorities, despite his long career in the French military and the military service of his relatives. This combined with another issue that adversely affected his reputation. The younger woman he moved in with at No. 96 was often drunk and sometimes resorted to prostitution to supplement the couple's income.³⁶¹ Situations like theirs may have cast a negative light on refugees, and by contrast, led some resident families to nurture some level of self-importance and righteousness.³⁶²

This is echoed by yet another family at No. 100 whose predicament is described in the letter on figure 11. By comparison, residents working in armament factories had comfortable salaries of 7 or 8 francs a day. That difference must also have contributed, by raising the residents' relative class position compared to the newcomers, to "indigenising" them and pushing back their own migrant status further into the background.

Saint-Denis, marriages, 1918, 2.02.1918; 1E66/395, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1924, vol. 2, No. 1413; APP, CB 92.21, 1925/170, 289 *bis*, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925; *J.O.R.F.*, *Lois et décrets*, 21.11.1921, 3065, Augustin Hug.

³⁶¹ The hardship faced by that couple indicates that the addition of the Alsatian refugee's military pension (about 2 francs a day), refugee allocation (1,25 fr.) and salary as a day labourer were not enough to cover the rising costs of living, even though rent was virtually free. *J.O.R.F.*, *Lois et décrets*, 3.10.1912, 8355.

³⁶² On the whole, however, Saint-Denis does not seem to have been a hotspot of anti-refugee xenophobia, even though some of them were accused, in the press or by anonymous letters, of taking advantage of their situation: see Pierre de Peretti, *Saint-Denis 1870-1920*, *op. cit.*, 15; APP, CB 92.11, 1915/273, 15.05.1915, *JSD*, 10.11.1915; SDMA, 4 H 3/43, Letter from Emma Demilde to the Mayor of Saint-Denis 3.01.1916. At the beginning of the conflict, local families were particularly sympathetic to Belgians, given the atrocities committed by the German armies and the heroic resistance of the Belgian soldiers celebrated by the press. (*JSD*, 27.12.1914, "Le Drapeau belge.") At the Plaine primary school, 263 francs were raised in December 1914 from selling Belgian flags to locals.

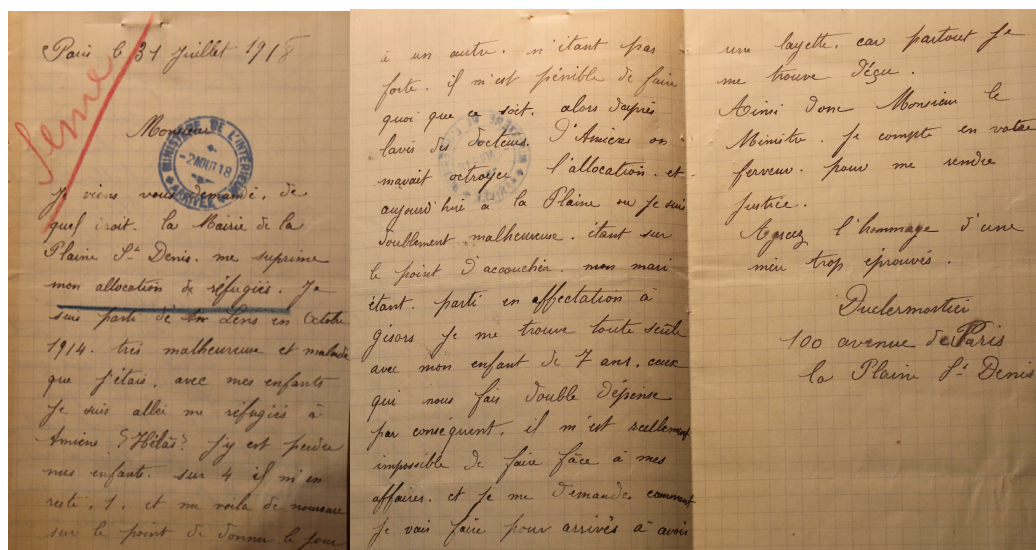


Figure 11: A letter from a refugee at No. 100 to the Préfet de la Seine, 31.07.1918³⁶³

There are other indications during the war and after, that the presence in the cités and in their immediate surroundings of people of previously unseen origins contributed to reinforcing the sense of belonging of earlier immigrants. When the owner of the bar at No. 96, born in Paris to Italian parents, fought a Greek worker on the street, such a dynamic may have been at play.³⁶⁴

Chinese and colonial workers, just like English and later American soldiers, also served as points of comparison, beside being objects of desire and fascination. Mouton, more than Legras, employed North-African workers, some of whom remained for

³⁶³ "Sir / I come to ask you what gives the Plaine-Saint-Denis municipality the right to take away my refugee allowance. I left Lens in October 1914, very miserable and sick, with my children. I took refuge in Amiens. Sadly, I have lost my children there. Out of 4 I only have one left, and I am about to give birth to another one. I am weak and it is hard for me to do anything. Then based on the opinion from the doctors in Amiens, I was granted the allowance, and today [I am stripped of it] in the Plaine, where I am in a double predicament. Because I am about to give birth and my husband has been sent to Gisors. I am all alone with my 7-year-old child, which makes two mouths to feed. As a result, it is really impossible for me to make ends meet, and I wonder how I am going to do to get a layette, because everywhere I am disappointed..."

³⁶⁴ AD93, 4U7/1041, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis-Sud, procès-verbal c. Rallis, 11.03.1922 (see also above, note 345).

years after the war.³⁶⁵ Chinese and Indochinese workers mostly worked on the railway and at armaments factories. During the conflict, more than a few Plainards felt empowered to treat these foreign-looking workers as strangers who could be taken advantage of, as when a Chinese worker was attacked in front of the Plaine's cinema by teenagers.³⁶⁶

In addition, the spatial segregation of North African, Chinese and Indochinese men, and their poor living conditions in dirty barracks, must have affected the Plainards' representations about these foreigners and about themselves as a result.³⁶⁷ That did not mean that they would not mingle with each other, quite the opposite.³⁶⁸ But racist prejudices could be hard to overcome. A former resident at No. 96, who was now the concierge of Louis and Maria in the nearby impasse Trézel, called the police on a North-African man for no apparent reason.³⁶⁹

By contrast, members of a truck depot of the British army, stationed around the corner from the cités from March 1915, rapidly integrated into the neighbourhood. A lot of them had affairs with French women, which translated into pregnancies and marriages.³⁷⁰ As they picked up French, some Plainards learned words of English, like an Italian born worker from No. 84 who would say "good night" to his concierge in English.³⁷¹ The British presence was a true bonanza for young hoodlums of the area,³⁷² and even more so for local bars. When the local British command issued a blanket

³⁶⁵ APP, CB 92.19,1922/1165, 29.12.1922.

³⁶⁶ APP, CB 92.14, 1917/1084, 4.11.1917.

³⁶⁷ On the colonial workers' living conditions, see *Bulletin des usines de guerre*, vol. 1, No. 44/346, 26.02.1917.

³⁶⁸ See chapter 4, p. 393 *sqq.*

³⁶⁹ AD93, 4U7/721, 11.02.1916, 10.03.1916, Ben Naceur c. Hepply.

³⁷⁰ AD93, 1E66/330, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1915, No. 355, 24.11.1915; 1E66/332, marriages, 1917, No. 153, 1.04.1917; 1E66/334, marriages, 1918, No. 266, 23.05.1918; 1E66/334, marriages, No. 517, 10.10.1918; 1E66/334, marriages, 1918, No. 533, 26.10.1918; 1E66/334, marriages, 1918, No. 557, 16.11.1918; 1E66/335, marriages, 1919, No. 226, 7.04.1919; 1E66/337, marriages, 1920, No. 223, 28.02.1920.

³⁷¹ APP, CB 92.12, 1916/436, 25.05.1916.

³⁷² They constantly stole materials from the depot. APP, CB 92.12, 1916/202, 22-25.02.1916.

prohibition of them –mostly on account of prostitution cases– an outcry ensued, with M. Poullain featuring among the signatories of the petition, which suggests that the Tommies were frequent customers at No. 102.³⁷³

For a Lorrainer woman born at No. 100 who married one of the British soldiers, the nationality of her husband probably signalled weaker ties to her family's region of origin, compared to her parents' generation. Her father and his siblings, despite having all emigrated to the Paris area, had exclusively married Lorrainer women. At the same time, her husband's foreign origin and the trips they took to Britain in the 1920s –as evidenced by her passport reproduced in figure 12– may have reinforced her self-identification as a French woman.³⁷⁴



Figure 12: Detail of the passport of Alice Lacy née Isz, issued on 5.11.1923

³⁷³ APP, CB 92.11, 1915/605, 26-29.08.1915; SDMA, 4 H 3/58, Letter-petition from the shopkeepers of the Plaine-Saint-Denis to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 1.05.1916.

³⁷⁴ AD93, 1E66/337, marriages, 1920, No. 223, 28.02.1920; Int. Lacy (No.1), 27.01.2017.

On their part, American soldiers in the Plaine could trigger even more complex questions for residents who approached them, as many of these servicemen were immigrants themselves, from Italy, Poland, Germany or Turkey.³⁷⁵ As for the Serb, Czech, Romanian and Polish workers, who started making their presence felt in the cités during the interwar period –mostly staying at the hotel at No. 102–, they once again provided longtime domestic or foreign migrants in the cités with new points of comparison and difference.

Distant connections

Finally, for circulations to happen between residents and the people making up their networks, physical movement of people was not indispensable. They could just send things back and forth.

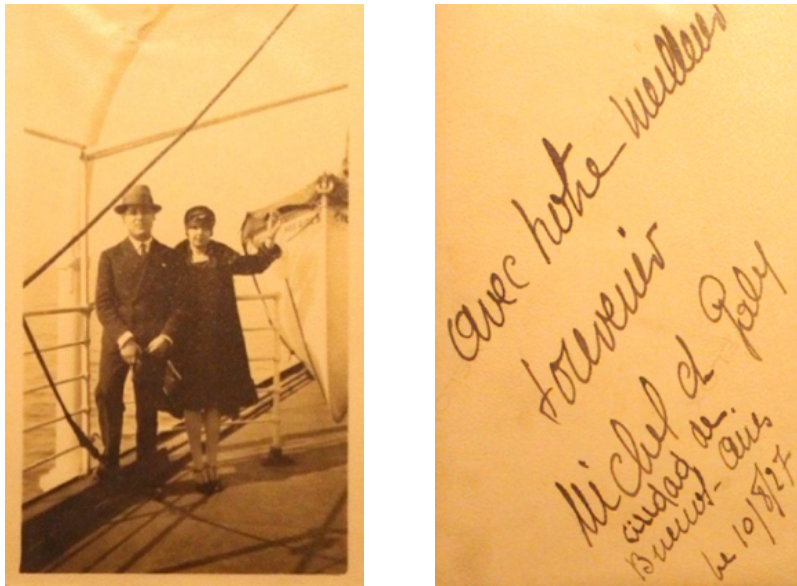
The single most important type of object to travel between residents and people in other places was correspondence. Unfortunately, the few specimens that survive in private collections are only a tiny fraction of the volume of postcards and letters that came in and out of the cités. Information about the residents' literacy and the various patterns of network-based migrations evidenced above lead to the strong belief that a lot of paper circulated between the cités and the places of origin, and even between the Plaine and other destinations.

Spaniards at No. 96, like the Trenados, or at No. 100, like the Garcías and Rabanedos, who did exchange letters with their respective families in Spain, may have kept stronger ties than others, both materially and culturally, with their place of origin.³⁷⁶ The mere necessity of replying was forcing them to maintain some practice

³⁷⁵ AD93, 1E66/380, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1918, vol. 1, No. 917-921, 3-4.09.1918; 1E66/380, deaths, 1918, vol. 1, No. 994 and 1021; 1E66/380, deaths, 1918, vol. 1, No. 1101, 4.10.1918; 1E66/380, deaths, 1918, vol. 1, No. 1492, 5.11.1918; 1E66/380, deaths, 1918, vol. 1, No. 1494, 6.11.1918.

³⁷⁶ FNA, 19780314/237, 23223 x 48, Pedro Trenado; 19790863/178, 11637X54, Leandro García; 19780314/140, 19581 x 48, Thomas Rabanedo.

of their written language, which otherwise slowly became unnecessary in the Plaine. As for Luigi Pirolli's younger brother Michel, who settled in Argentina in 1929, he sent pictures to his family, but entirely ceased using Italian in writing, as opposed to his other brothers.³⁷⁷



*Figure 13: Photograph sent by Michel Pirolli and his wife
to Michel's parents, 10.08.1927*

During the war, the conflict increased the volume of exchanges as networks became more splintered than before. As he left for the front, a soldier from No. 96 –one of the concierge's sons–, took with him a booklet of his contact addresses. In it, he had written with care his relatives' addresses and the units of his childhood friends, so that he could keep exchanging news with them while on the front.

³⁷⁷ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016.

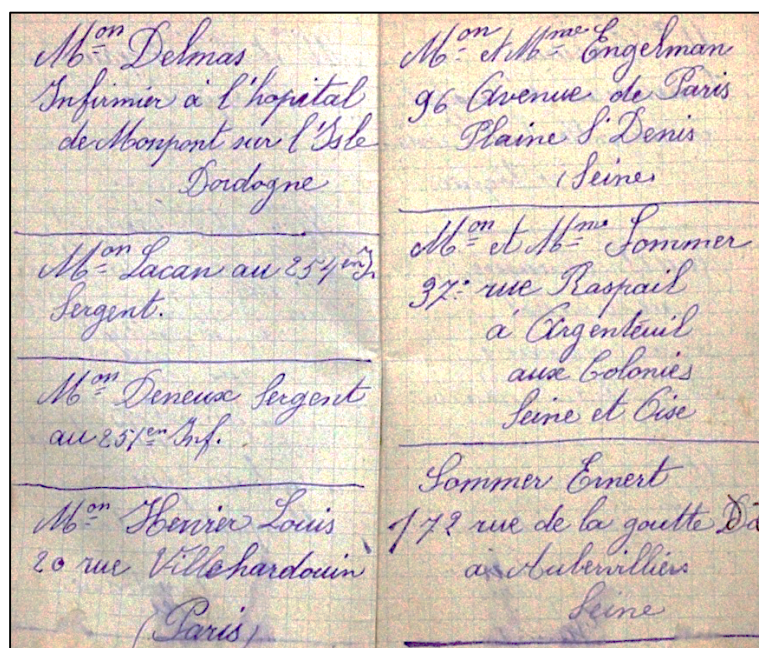


Figure 14: Pages from François Sommer's address book, 1914-1916

His first cousin, put in jail for desertion, also kept a frequent correspondence with his wife in the Plaine before and during his incarceration. She received and passed him letters that had arrived from his friends, relatives, and various institutions.³⁷⁸

Exploited children of the cités also wrote letters home, sometimes writing down what the padroni dictated to assuage the parents who did not receive their due. Luigi Einaudi, the future President of the Italian Republic who was then a journalist at *La Stampa*, gave half-exaggerated models of such letters: “Caro padre o cara madre, io questa lettera ve la scrivo (o me la fo scrivere) di nascosto dal padrone! Io sto bene assai in salute, meglio di voi! Il padrone non ci fa mancare niente o se lo leva di bocca lui e a moglie per noi! Qui non c’è lavoro ora e stiamo a carico suo! Perciò pazientate per il denaro e non dubitate.” And when the parents threatened to come to France too, another typical letter was: “Non venite, perché io non me ne voglio tornare al paese a

³⁷⁸ Letters from Angèle Engelmann to her husband Émile, 1.05.1915, 25.07.1915, in SHAT, GR 11 J 3047, Jugement rendu par le Conseil de guerre de la région fortifiée de Verdun contre Engelmann Émile, soldat au 164e R.I., ruling No. 230, 4.09.1915, and GR 11 J 3053, Dossier de procédure.

*soffrire! Se venite, io me ne scappo o non mi fo trovare! Il padrone mi vuol più bene di voi!*³⁷⁹ If the children tried to send genuine words through the mail, Vozza and Carlesimo made sure, by bribing the postman, that they were never dispatched.³⁸⁰

This sort of disingenuous correspondence was not as exceptional as it may seem. When information circulated between relatives we know that all sorts of misrepresentations, exaggerations and omissions were possible.³⁸¹ And illiteracy was not even a real barrier. Between 1900 and 1906, for instance, it is very likely that Giacinto Pirolli, aside from exchanging with his relatives when he came back –which he did at least a couple of times– sent and received letters from home, with literate members of the family helping those who could not read nor write.³⁸²

Another type of correspondence hints at the high level of contact residents kept with their relatives: formal consents to marriages that parents went to sign at a local notary's or public official's in their region of origin. Before she could marry Louis Pirolli in 1910, the parents of Maria had signed off on such a letter before a town official in Italy, who had then dispatched it to Saint-Denis.³⁸³ The mandatory character of this procedure –at least for minors³⁸⁴– was a mechanism that must have at once “generated

³⁷⁹ “Dear father or dear mother, I write this letter (or have it written for me) without the knowledge of the padrone! I am very healthy, more than you! The padrone provides for everything we need and he and his wife go without for our sake! Here there is no work right now, and we are in his charge! Therefore you need to wait for the money and have no doubts.” / “Do not come, because I don't want to come back home and suffer! If you come, I will flee and you won't find me! The padrone loves me more than you do!” (Luigi Einaudi, “Un traffico infame di carne umana,” *La Stampa*, 26.05.1901)

³⁸⁰ Ugo Cafiero, *art. cit.*, 6.

³⁸¹ During the Great War, for instance, Spanish migrants told their relatives in the village extravagant stories, like the one that the Eiffel tower had been brought down by German saboteurs (Alvaro Alcalá Galiano, *España ante el conflicto europeo, 1914-1915*, Madrid, 1916; Luis Bello, *Espana durante la guerra*, Madrid, 1918). On this issue, see David A. Gerber, “Acts of Deceiving and Withholding in Immigrant Letters: Personal Identity and Self-Presentation in Personal Correspondence,” *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 39 (2005), No. 2, 315–30.

³⁸² On this issue of “vernacular publication” within families, see David A. Gerber, “Epistolary Ethics: Personal Correspondence and the Culture of Emigration in the Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 19 (2000), No. 4, 12–14.

³⁸³ AD93, 1E66/321, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1910, Vol. 2, No. 377, 25.06.1910.

³⁸⁴ See in chapter 4, the procedures that dispensed some adults of that requirement.

and attenuated” translocal connections.³⁸⁵ In the Plaine, residents about to get married, whether French or foreign, had to write their parents to ask for their blessing. They would have had to explain why they were not marrying someone from their village, and probably cover the expenses of the procedure when it took place before a notary. From the parents’ standpoint, this was an opportunity to take stock of their child’s life in Paris and realise that they were not coming back soon. This moment of “performative” correspondence might have entailed even more complex dynamics within families.³⁸⁶ There is a possibility that Maria, who had had a daughter with Luigi outside of wedlock, had been estranged for a while from her family. In that scenario, the unavoidable contact with her parents in the run-up to her 1910 wedding –in which Luigi may have helped, as Maria did not know how to write herself– may have provided both sides with an opportunity to mend fences and move on.

For others, by contrast, contact could be lost. Estrangement between husband and wives was frequent, more than actual divorces.³⁸⁷ In 1899, a woman residing at No. 96 knew that her husband had been living in Belgium for eight years, but had no news of him.³⁸⁸ Also at No. 96, a Breton housewife never reappeared after being caught in bed with a lover in 1907.³⁸⁹ Between parents and children, communication could be cut off as well, revealing the depth of intra-family grudges.³⁹⁰ Sometimes, people only pretended to have lost contact, but that could still reveal important rifts within families.

³⁸⁵ Roger Waldinger, *The Cross-Border Connection*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2015, 35. Waldinger uses the expression “cross-border connections,” but it would not be appropriate here, as French residents were also subject to the requirement.

³⁸⁶ We use “performative” here in the first sense coined by John L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962.

³⁸⁷ Based on mentions on marriage registries, less than 2% of marriages of residents between 1882 and 1931 were eventually dissolved in court.

³⁸⁸ AD93, 4U7/564, 12.05.1899, Laigle c. Laigle.

³⁸⁹ APP, CB 92.3, 1907/495, 31.03.1907.

³⁹⁰ A glassworker from Lorraine died at No. 98 in 1882, but his son, who had remained in Alsace, would only learn the news ten years later (AD93, 1E66/176, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1882, No. 532, 13.04.1882, Joseph Stenger; SDMA, CT83, Courriers à l’arrivée, Jan. 1892, Letter from Gustav Stenger fils, rue du Gaz 17, Mulhouse, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 1.01.1892). Mme Orsi, a longtime resident at No. 100, lost contact in the 1930s with her daughter who had settled in Nice (FNA, BB/11/11264, 77542 x 28, Costantino Gio Batta Orsi; Int. Verrecchia, No. 39, 4.09.2016).

A young woman at No. 100 declared under oath, along with her mother, that “her father has been absent for more than a year and that they [did] not know his last place of residence.” In fact, until his release four months earlier, he had been serving a 20-year sentence of forced labour at Cayenne penal colony for murder.³⁹¹

Remittances must also have been common for residents, at least when they earned enough to send a surplus back home. But except for the money sent –or not– by *padroni*, actual traces are scarce. It is hard to know, in particular, what means of transfer residents preferred. The simple insertion of cash in envelopes must have been elected by many, before banks and post offices developed alternative, reliable options.³⁹² This may have been the case of the young boy employed by Luigi Pirolli’s uncles in the 1880s, who had sent money to his mother in Pozzilli.³⁹³ In any case, money was the most common object, aside from handwritten paper, to circulate between the residents and their relatives. And the Plaine could also be the receiving end of the process.³⁹⁴

Lastly, other possessions could also travel between places, such as food items, although direct traces of these transmissions in the cités have eluded our investigations. Through these objects, as much as through the letters, more or less explicit ideas and symbols would have circulated as well. A form of immaterial trade must have been taking place within many families of residents just as elsewhere. Emigrants would have shared exotic, and sometimes embellished information about Paris and their lifestyle, while their correspondents back home would have sent words and objects re-

³⁹¹ AD93, 1E66/361, Saint-Denis, Civil registers, marriages, 1931, vol. 2, No. 560, 8.08.1931; AVP, D1U8 145, Cour d’assises de la Seine, 19.12.1914, Xavier Affairoux.

³⁹² In France, for instance, money orders were generalised in the 1890s (see Yves Lecouturier, *Histoire de la Poste en France*, Rennes: Ouest-France, 2011, 27). See also above, note 225.

³⁹³ AS Roma, *doc. cit.*, 5. Sources bear the mention of remittances through postal mandates by another musician from Filignano employing children, who was active in Normandy in the same years: see *Le Bonhomme normand*, 23.09.1887, “Mendicité lucrative”.

³⁹⁴ One day in 1903, a tenant at the hotel of the former resident and *padrone* Carlesimo, received 300 francs from Rome (APP, CB 92.1, 1905/41, 3.01.1905).

activating an emotional connection to the birthplace, and thereby influencing the emigrants' self-identifications and cognitive boundaries.³⁹⁵

The circulation of words, objects and ideas was perhaps the most crucial of all movements in the migration experience of residents, in spite of being at the same time the most difficult to document. The archival bias in that respect results from the massive imbalance in records between the movements of people and those of goods. That should not hide the fact that they were already, at the turn of the century, two inseparable pillars of long-distance mobility.



This chapter on movement across space has shown how migration itself could be intimately related, for residents, with the reconfigurations of their social status and cultural representations. Border-crossings, mobilisation of networks and resources, return-trips, as much as the arrival or departures of others, were key in constructing socio-cultural difference on the ground. They would alternatively enhance or reduce the salience of ethnonational, gender, class or age distinctions, which depended partly on spatial movements. These movements combined their effects with social and political interactions, which constantly redefined the residents' allegiances. This is the subject of the second part of this dissertation.

³⁹⁵ Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, Suzanne M. Sinke (eds.), *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants*, New York (NY): Palgrave Macmillan, 2006; Loretta Baldassar, Donna R. Gabaccia (eds.), *Intimacy and Italian Migration: Gender and Domestic Lives in a Mobile World*, New York (NY): Fordham University Press, 2011.

PART II

**INTERACTIONAL
ALLEGIANCES**

CHAPTER 3

Encounters and networks: the daily workings of interpersonal identifications

Saturday, May 27, 1899, in the early morning. Above the smoking factories of the Plaine-Saint-Denis, the skies were cloudy, and the temperature unusually cold. Through the heavy wooden door of 96 Avenue de Paris appeared a dark-haired young man, wearing his Sunday clothes. This was Victor Spreisser, a 24-year-old glass-carver at Legras. Born in German Lorraine, Victor had grown up in the Paris area for as long as he could remember. That morning, instead of going across to the factory for the morning shift, Victor –joined by both of his parents and probably a few others– turned right, and started walking up the Avenue towards the centre of Saint-Denis. They did not want to be late: at 11:30, Victor was due to get married. The bride, Rosalie, was a 19-year-old girl from the Massif Central, by way of Nogent-sur-Marne.¹

That same morning, a colleague and next-door neighbour of Victor's was also unable to take up his daily job at Legras, but for another reason. Lying on his bed at No. 100, that 22-year-old worker whom a newspaper identified as Maurice Reale, was recovering from a wound sustained the day before. An immigrant from Arpino, in central Italy, whose family had first set foot in the Plaine a couple of years earlier, he had been involved in a brawl with a fellow glassworker on the Avenue.² Not an uncommon sight in the area, by any means, especially on Fridays. Every other week, Friday was the payday, which often translated into heavier drinking than usual, with

¹ SDMA, E306, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1899, No. 235, 27.05.1899; *Le Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 28.05.1899.

² *La Petite République socialiste*, 27.05.1899.

its frequent corollary of insults, provocations, and fights.³ For want of first-hand accounts of the incident, the motives of that particular altercation remain unclear. Fortunately, there are many other similar, and better-documented, instances involving the residents of the tenement block and their neighbours over the years.

Exchange of vows, exchange of blows. For the inhabitants of 96-102 Av. de Paris, solidarity and antagonism had at times very tangible consequences, which could then leave traces in the archives. Following these trails should make it possible to get a better sense of the daily workings of interpersonal contacts. The residents' relations to others were dependent upon –and also the cause of– interactions of all sorts, which ran the entire gamut from stand-alone encounters (or even, possibly, distant mutual awareness without any actual in-person meeting) to durable networks and long-term relationships.

Who these men, women, and children thought they were; how they viewed and categorised others; to which extent these identifications fuelled, and were shaped by, their representations and their actions: those questions are critical to understand what was at play, for our subjects of study, in moments of recorded interaction. Friendships and hostilities have long interested scholars focused on intergroup relations. It is legitimate to make two assumptions in that regard. First, that either driven by origin, class, gender or age, the workings of positive or negative dispositions towards each other did not necessarily depend on pre-existing boundaries. Second, that interpersonal interaction had the potential to reconfigure some of the residents' earlier allegiances. This chapter is meant to investigate these two hypotheses.

³ It was not until the Great War that an informal practice took hold at the glass factory and in other factories in the Plaine, consisting in giving workers daily advances on their salaries (see AVP, D1U10 719, Conseil de prud'hommes de la Seine, section pour les produits chimiques, 8.08.1922, No. 44699, Plumier et Sté Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies).

Based on a variety of clues as to which representations were enacted in different interactional contexts, we may be in a position to make an informed assessment of the residents' *culture* and their *social* life. In other words, to examine their identifications on the one hand, and their relations on the other, although the two were never actually separate. In that sense, this chapter intends to provide an understanding of the intricate, and ever evolving, residents' networks, in the context of what Rudolph Vecoli called the "everyday rubbing" of people against each other.⁴

The micro approach presented here, combining close analysis and micro-quantitative assessments, offers an investigation structured in two sections. It examines whether, and when, identifications based on geographic origin were relevant, first, in people's solidarity dynamics, and second, in their antagonisms.

3.1. Solidarity

In the cités, the grounds for difference were diverse.⁵ The multifaceted relation to one's place of origin was only one of the parameters that could be relevant to the residents' sense of solidarity or hostility. At times, origin-based identifications were enacted in the interactions with others: then it was at once a distinctive trait and a group-shaping boundary, to put it in Frederik Barth's terms.⁶ And yet substantiating, at ground level, the extent of that phenomenon, and understanding whether it resulted in ethnic or ethno-national "groupness,"⁷ is a challenge that has puzzled migration scholars for decades. A close look at the residents' alliances, friendships and common

⁴ Rudolph Vecoli, "An inter-ethnic...", *art. cit.*, 228.

⁵ We borrow the expression from Rogers Brubaker, *Grounds for Difference*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2015.

⁶ Frederik Barth, *op. cit.*

⁷ On "groupness," see Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe*, New York (NY): Cambridge University Press 1996, himself borrowing the term from Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Reading (MA): Addison-Wesley, 1978, 62 *sqq.*

grounds, suggests that the relevance of origin in people's networks very much depended on whom, when, and why.

3.1.1. Spouses and lovers

A marriage database

One way to approach the residents' networks over time is to look at the records of their major life events: births, marriages and deaths. As historians have illustrated for decades, civil and religious registers, as well as notarial records, provide a crucial source to reconstitute networks at the local level.⁸ While "structurally numerical," they can also be seen as "structurally narrative."⁹ This is why we exhaustively examined the uninterrupted series of Saint-Denis registers spanning all fifty years from 1882 through 1931. In the end, we found 282 weddings involving at least one resident; 615 declarations of births into families from the cités; and 462 declarations of deaths.¹⁰

The first lesson of that statistical corpus is that the social network that mattered most to residents remained their family. Once we supplement the incomplete, and

⁸ See e.g., in the French context, Pierre Goubert, "Une richesse historique en cours d'exploitation: les registres paroissiaux," *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales*, Vol. 9 (1954), No. 1, 83–93; Joan Scott, *The Glassworkers of Carmaux: French Craftsmen and Political Action in a Nineteenth-Century City*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1974; Alain Corbin, *Le Monde retrouvé de Louis-François Pinagot*, *op. cit.*; Emma Rothschild, "Isolation and Economic Life in Eighteenth-Century France," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 119 (2014), No. 4, 1055–82.

⁹ See Emma Rothschild, *art. cit.*, 1064, referring to François Furet, "Quantitative History," *Daedalus*, Vol. 100 (1971), No. 1, 158. Leslie Page Moch has already perused a sample of Saint-Denis civil registers for that very purpose, focusing on the networks of Breton migrants: see Leslie Page Moch, *The Pariahs of Yesterday*, *op. cit.*, and *Id.*, "I Bretoni a Parigi: legami regionali e reti urbani in un'epoca di urbanizzazione," *Quaderni storici*, Vol. 36 (2001), No. 106, 177–99 (transl. Cristina Scarpocchi).

¹⁰ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends." These figures are almost certainly incomplete, as residents may have married, declared a birth or died in another town, which should, but may not have been always transcribed on the Saint-Denis registers (not to mention our own mistakes in collecting the data). For that matter, we included in the corpus nine marriages which were celebrated out of Saint-Denis, in the town of residency of the resident's spouse.

sometimes misleading, explicit mentions of family members in the registers¹¹ with information about family ties drawn from other sources and a comparison between witnesses' and spouses' surnames, we can state with confidence that over 45% of witnesses to the residents' weddings were family members, with no visible discrepancy between genders.¹² This rate appears quite remarkable in view of the almost all-migrant demography of the Plaine, which provided residents, in principle, with fewer immediately available relatives than in their places of origin. If anything, this shows the importance of family migration. It must be noted, in that regard, that while some scholars have argued that the bigger the distance between the birthplace and the place of marriage, the fewer family members among witnesses, our dataset does not point in that direction: coefficients of correlation between those two variables are close to zero for both grooms and brides.¹³ What emerges clearly, however, is a first decrease of the rate of relatives among witnesses, followed by a sharp, predictable drop between 1914 and 1918, and a post-war return to the level of the 1900s.¹⁴

¹¹ In our corpus, it was not uncommon, for instance, that the groom's relatives were listed, oftentimes unrealistically, as "friends" of the bride (more than the other way around).

¹² The overall rate of relatives among witnesses is 467 out of 1017. Percentages by gender are 45.6% of relatives for grooms and 45.8% for brides. At Victor Spreisser's wedding, his two witnesses were his two brothers-in-law, while Rosalie's were her brother-in-law and her uncle (AVP, V4E 7622, Paris 18th, 1887, marriages, No. 1760, 31.12.1887; SDMA, E302, marriages, 1898, No. 6, 8.01.1898). So far, social historians who had wished to estimate that rate based on the same type of source had limited themselves to family members listed as such, a method that understandably yielded lower percentages. According to Maurice Garden, for instance, family members would have accounted for about a third of those explicitly identified witnesses in Paris in 1885 (Maurice Garden, "Mariages parisiens à la fin du XIX^e siècle: une micro-analyse quantitative," *Annales de démographie historique*, 1998, 125–6).

¹³ The coefficient of correlation (R^2) between the Saint-Denis–birthplace distances and the percentage of family members among witnesses is 0.035 for grooms and 0.009 for brides in our 296-marriage database. Compare with the analysis of Claire Lemerrier, "Analyse de réseaux et histoire de la famille: une rencontre encore à venir?," *Annales de démographie historique*, Vol. 109 (2005), No. 1, 19.

¹⁴ Studies in historic demography on French *banlieues* in the 19th century have shown that variations in that respect did not fit a homogenous pattern. See Vincent Gourdon, Émilie Joz, "Les témoins de mariage civil dans une commune de la banlieue lyonnaise au XIX^e siècle: Tassin-la-Demi-Lune (1793–1895)," in Philippe Castagnetti (ed.), *Images et pratiques de la ville (XV^e–XIX^e siècles)*, Saint-Étienne: Publications de l'université de Saint-Étienne, 2006, 161–87; Fabrice Boudjaaba, "La banlieue et Paris dans le premier XIX^e siècle. Le choix des témoins au mariage civil à Ivry-sur-Seine," *Annales de démographie historique*, Vol. 126 (2013), No. 2, 141–72.

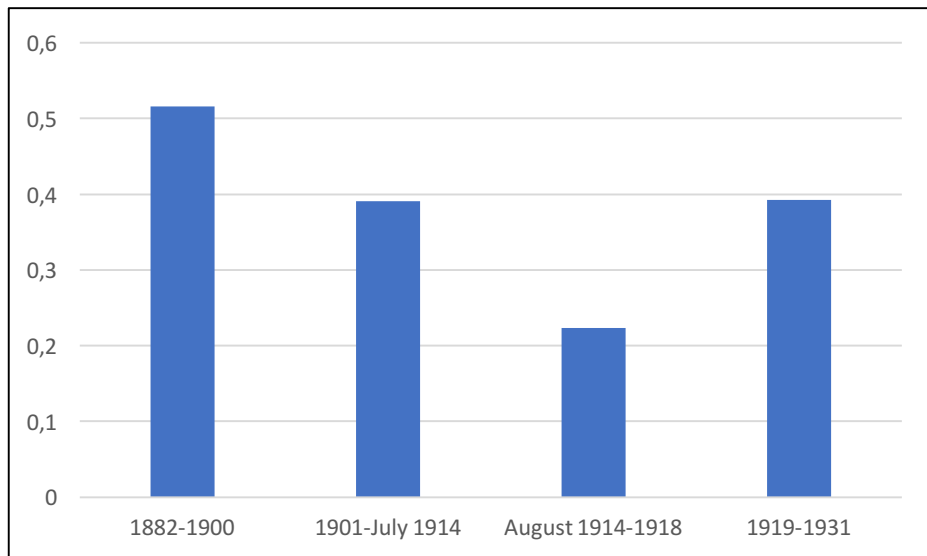


Figure 1: Proportion of relatives among witnesses to the residents' marriages, 1882-1931 (expressed as a decimal)

Residents probably married less directly into family networks than was the case back in their community of origin.¹⁵ And yet overwhelming evidence points to the enduring, if somewhat waning, primacy of family-based relations. Sources produced by law enforcement, in particular, attest to the time spent together by pairs of brothers, cousins, or sisters from the tenement.¹⁶

Family solidarity *per se* does not say much about the residents' sense of belonging to a particular group bonded by a common origin, although the attachment to one's relatives can provide a basis, among others, for that sort of identifications.¹⁷ Only the

¹⁵ An indication of this could be found in the series of religious registers from the local church: for only one religious wedding of a resident, out of 186 celebrated there over fifty years, did a waiver have to be obtained for consanguinity, in that case to the second degree. Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1919, No. 63, 12.07.1919.

¹⁶ AVP, D3U9 136, Cour d'appel de la Seine, 4.06.1896, upholding Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 8e ch., 25.06.1895, Garnier and Garnier (brothers); *Le Matin*, 10.01.1900, *La Justice*, 12.01.1900 (Pirolli brothers); APP, CB 92.1, 1905/113, 2.02.1905 (Calcagni brothers); APP, CB 92.16, 1919/305, 7.04.1919 (Gimenez cousins); APP, CB 92.3, 1908/106, 31.01.1908 (Tison sisters).

¹⁷ See Joseph Ruane, Jennifer Todd, "The roots of intense ethnic conflict may not in fact be ethnic: categories, communities and path dependence," *Archives européennes de sociologie*, Vol. 45 (2004), No. 2, 209–32.

shape of networks outside the family can denote the social weight of origin, and its relevance within a broader, ethnic or national network. To assess that, a common method consists in comparing, based on marriage records, the respective places of births of each newly-wed. Students of migration have long been interested in mixed marriages to assess integration and track the footprint of ethnicity in social networks.¹⁸ However, in its traditional, nationally defined conception, the notion of mixed marriage appears both theoretically flawed and particularly ill-suited for our micro-context.¹⁹ In the cités, approaching mixed marriage through differences in nationality would be particularly misleading, since many residents came from areas spanning several States where people had a high degree of cultural and linguistic homogeneity—for instance at the confines of France, the German Empire, Luxembourg and Belgium.

A less distorting method consists, we argue, in measuring the distance between the spouses' towns of birth.²⁰ From such a measurement we can derive, first, general

¹⁸ One of the earlier studies in that respect was Julius Drachsler, *Intermarriage in New York City: A Statistical Study of the Amalgamation of European Peoples*, New York (NY): Columbia University, 1921.

¹⁹ Treating unions between fellow nationals as non-mixed, no matter where these two people came from, or viewing two people as foreign to each other because they did not happen to share the same nationality, essentialises the spouses' ethno-national identifications before even starting to look for traces of such representations. The contingent character of marriages' "mixedness" has been recognized by scholars as early as the 1970s (Jacques Périquaud, "Le mariage mixte comme indicateur social de l'adaptation : le mariage franco-arménien," *Ethnies*, Vol. 4 (1974), 41–54; Dominique Krzykowski, Élian Djaoui, "Mariages mixtes, sexualité, préjugés," *Ibid.*, 117–34). But few have bothered to reframe the notion (see e.g. Augustin Barbara, "Mixed Marriages. Some Key Questions," *International Migration*, Vol. 32 (1994), No. 4, 571–86; Emmanuelle Santelli, Beate Collet, "Couples endogames, couples mixtes : options conjugales et parcours de vie de descendants d'immigrés en France," *Migrations Société*, Vol. 145 (2013), No. 1, 107–20). Those who have tried to reframe the notion have remained at a taxonomic level: see e.g. Sayaka Osanami Törngren, Nahikari Irastorza, Miri Song, "Toward building a conceptual framework on intermarriage," *Ethnicities*, Vol. 16 (2016), No. 4, 497–520. In her dissertation on the Spaniards of the Plaine-Saint-Denis, Natacha Lillo left the national approach of mixed marriages unquestioned, and used the rather blunt method of measuring mixedness by comparing surnames ("Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'...", *op. cit.*, 730).

²⁰ Spouses' places of birth are always mentioned in the civil registers at the period under scrutiny. Note that these locations could themselves be unrepresentative of what a particular individual would have viewed as the true place of their origin. There is little doubt that Alessandro Gallaccio, for instance, who was born in Stockholm in 1908 into a family from Southern Italy which promptly returned home, before settling at No. 102 in the 1920s, viewed Sweden as the place he was from. In 1931, he declared the family village in Italy as his birthplace (AD93, D2 M8 91, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 102 av. Wilson;

statistics.²¹ The median distance between spouses' birthplaces over fifty years stands at 143.9 km. A third of the residents' marriages happened between spouses whose places of birth were less than 50 km apart. A similar proportion is made up of unions between people whose towns of origin were separated by more than 300 km. In only 10 marriages, or 3.4% of the total, was the distance greater than 1,000 km. Nine of those ten long-distance weddings, so to speak, occurred after 1919. The other one is a marriage of 1904 in which the groom came from Arpino, in the province of Caserta, while the bride had been born in Bayonne, in southwestern France, but to parents from the same area as her husband.²² Overall, the distance seems to have increased after the First World War.²³ To explain that trend, marriages with great origin differentials seem to play a major role, as shown in this representation of distances.

SDMA, 1F33, Saint-Denis census, 1931, 102 Av. Wilson). Besides, certain birthplaces are so big that they are not as indicative as others, when it comes to the degree of proximity of their denizens; two people from the same city differ a lot from two people from the same little village.

²¹ Once we had retrieved the spouses' birthplaces, and subsequently each of their geographical coordinates, we were able to measure a distance between them for 289 out of 292 marriages, using a simple trigonometric formula: $\Delta = \text{ACOS}(\text{SIN}(\text{latitude1}) * \text{SIN}(\text{latitude2})) + \text{COS}(\text{latitude1}) * \text{COS}(\text{latitude2}) * \text{COS}(\text{longitude2} - \text{longitude1}) * 6371$. This is the classic formula for a geodesic on a sphere; it is therefore more accurate for shorter distances. For reference, see e.g. https://geodesie.ign.fr/contenu/fichiers/Distance_longitude_latitude.pdf (last accessed April 23, 2018). The three missing distances are due to the tiny fraction of place names that remain unidentifiable because of misspelling or insufficient legibility in the registers.

²² SDMA, E330, marriages, 1904, Vol. 1, No. 59, 13.02.1904; for the origin of Catherine's parents, see FNA, BB/11/13261, 22005 X 30.

²³ The median distance was only 137,2 km before August 1914, stayed at that same level until the end of 1919, and rose to 174,8 km for the period between 1920 to 1931.

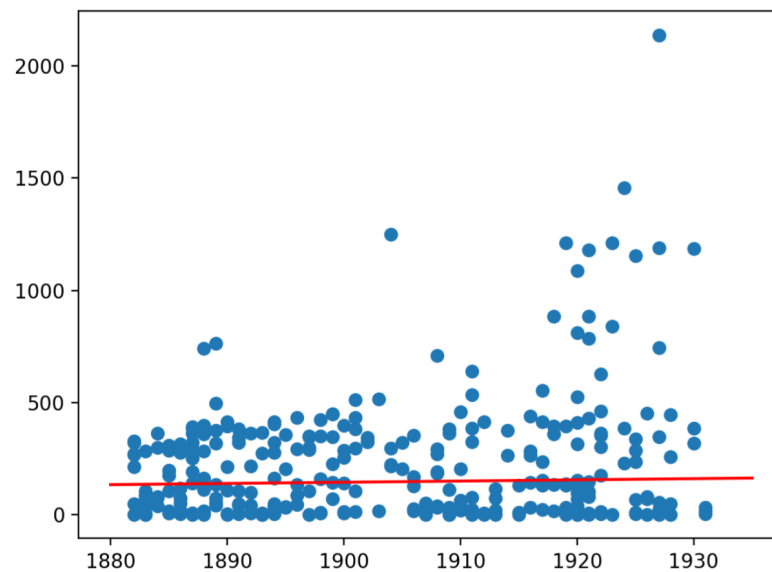


Figure 2: Origin differential between spouses in marriages featuring at least one resident at Nos. 96-102 (in km)

This gradual increase could be related to the presence –as in the 1904 marriage we just mentioned– of a second generation, born in the Paris area or another immigration destination, who would have married people from their parents’ region of birth. But we can say that this situation is too uncommon in the data to carry any statistical weight.²⁴ In fact, the major shift seems to have occurred earlier in the period. In the twelve years 1900-1911, the median distance was even higher than in the 1920s, at 189.1 km against 174.8 km.²⁵ In reality, it is only at the very beginning of our period,

²⁴ We have been able to detect with certainty only three such marriages between 1920 and 1931, and even adding a few more we do not know of (for want of certain information regarding the origin of the spouses’ parents), the proportion would remain too low to account for the overall increase on the median number. See AD93, 1E66/345, 348, 352, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1923, vol. 2, No. 905; 1925, vol. 1, No. 211; 1927, vol. 1, No. 260.

²⁵ If we construct another metric of inter-marriage diversity by calculating the percentage of residents marrying someone who did not come from the same administrative district nor from one immediately next to it, the pivotal position of the first years of the century is confirmed: the proportion in the 1900s is equivalent to the one in the interwar period. The rates in that case are respectively 59.3% (1900-1911) and 59.7% (1920-1931).

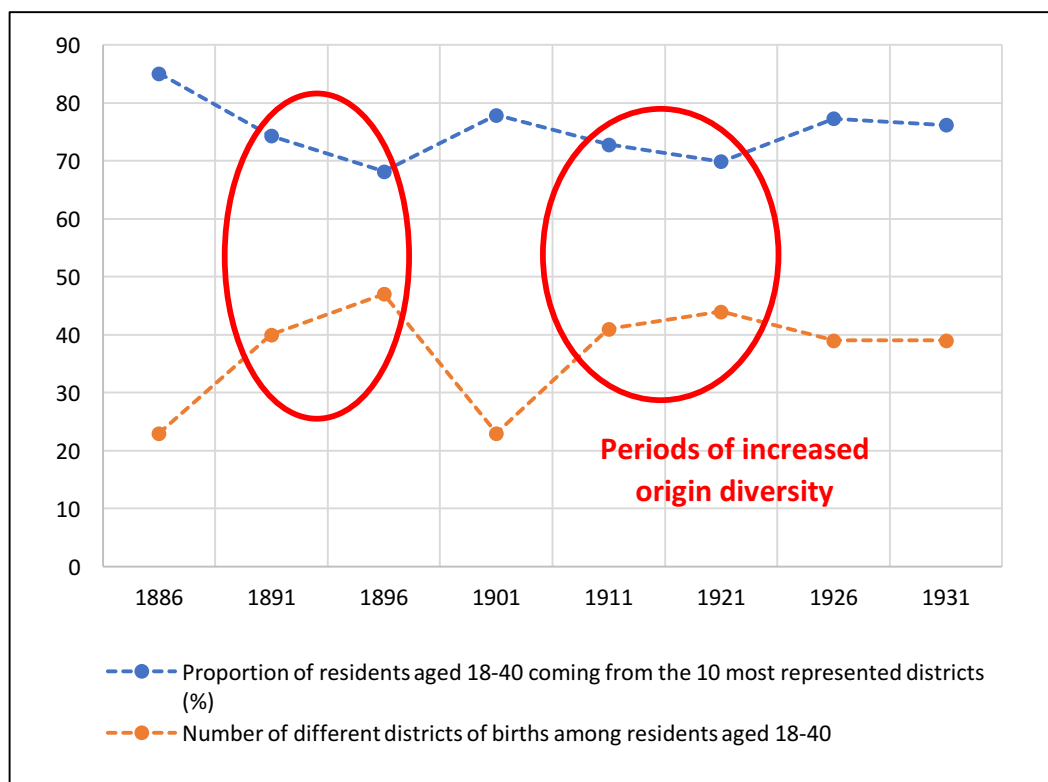
in the late 19th century, that the circles connecting the spouses' birthplaces had the shortest radius.²⁶

Reasons for these evolutions must have had to do, in part, with an increasing diversity of origins in the Plaine over time, for we know that people always tended to find their spouse nearby, in the neighbourhood. Comparing the addresses of spouses in our database results in a median distance of about 150 meters between them.²⁷ Unfortunately, there is no precise benchmark of the Plaine's origin diversity at that period. It would be a Herculean task to reconstruct the origins of the thousands of inhabitants in the area, all the more so before 1911, when censuses did not record people's birthplace. What we can produce, however, is a measure of the diversity at 96-102 Avenue de Paris, since we have been able to ascertain a large part of the residents' origins across decades.²⁸ Then we can look at the actual distances between spouses both living in the buildings and compare them with these general trends.

²⁶ Between 1882 and 1893, the median origin differential stood at 114,2 km, and marriages featuring places of birth more than one district apart accounted for only 51,1% of the total.

²⁷ Even though that may be slightly misleading as the cases of identical addresses in the marriage act often corresponded to only one of the newly-weds' actual place residence, where the couple had decided to live.

²⁸ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Census files." Restricting the analysis to residents aged 18 to 40, the age group most likely to get married, the graph uses two metrics of diversity over time: the proportion of residents coming from the 10 most represented districts, and the total number of districts of origin among all residents.



*Figure 3: Origin concentration among residents
at No. 96-102 Av. de Paris aged 18-40*

Two moments of diversity increase emerge: one in the 1890s, and another, of a lesser magnitude, in the 1910s. The actual distances between spouses both living in the buildings, as shown in the following graph through moving five-year medians, generally match these increases in demographic diversity. But it also points to another dynamic: a continuous decline of the origin differential from 1900 to the early 1910s, which stands in contrast to the upward trend of the residents' diversity at that period.

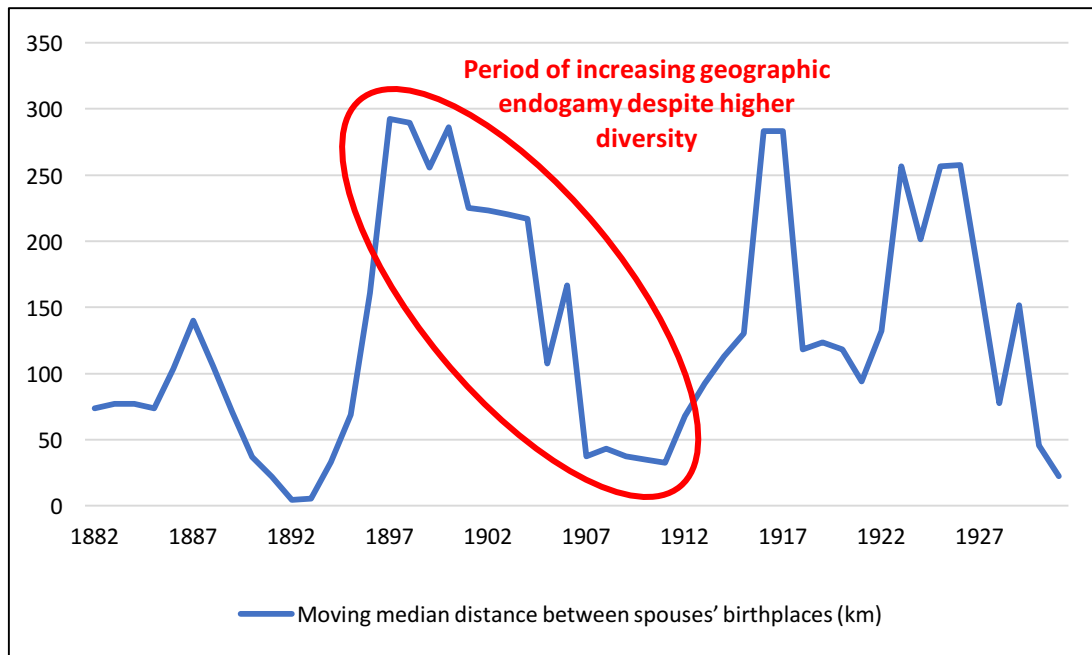


Figure 4: The origin difference of spouses when both lived at Nos. 96-102

This outstanding reduction was essentially driven by No. 100 inhabitants.²⁹ But for these trends to be analysed further, they need to be refined by geographic areas. Let us return to all marriages of residents, not only those in which both spouses lived in the tenement block. Instead of predetermining relevant origin groups, it is preferable to look at the data to determine the origins with the highest rates of geographic endogamy. The median distances between spouses according to their respective districts of origin looks like a reasonable indicator in that respect.

²⁹ If we check the actual origin differential between spouses against the one resulting from a random matching of those spouses with one another, we find that at that address, between 1900 and 1910, while the random benchmark stood at 322.9 km, the average distance actually observed between spouses' birthplaces was 71 km. At No. 96, the corresponding figures were 496.2 and 335.7 km, suggesting a much less pronounced endogamy in those same years.

Spouse's district of birth	Median distance between spouses' birthplaces (km)
Burgos	4.50
Campobasso	15.27
Caserta	20.90
Santander	36.54
Moselle	41.36
Meurthe	62.17
Oise	68.07
Vosges	77.09
Bas-Rhin	89.99

Figure 5: Districts of origin for which the median distance between spouses' birthplaces was inferior to 100 km (marriages including at least one resident)³⁰

This table hints at broad geographic clusters which we can then use to query the data according to the residents' origin. If we select, first, residents who were born in Alsace and Lorraine, 39.5% of their unions featured spouses whose origins were less than 50 km apart. In their case the median distance, over the entire half-century, was 90 km.³¹ Beyond the mere demographic effect of the sizable population from these Eastern regions present in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, these figures do hint at a visible propensity to marry people from the same region.

³⁰ Districts which appeared in less than 3 marriages have been excluded.

³¹ In the first two decades, which accounted for more than three quarters of those unions as it corresponded to the time of maximal presence of people from these parts in the cités, the rate of marriages with a distance inferior to 50 km was 45.2% between 1882-1891, and 47.6% between 1892-1901. The rate then fell radically after that (only 1 out of 10 from 1902 to 1931).

Such a trend is even clearer for residents from the Sora-Cassino area, shared between the provinces of Caserta and Campobasso. Over 80% of them married someone from the same area, with a median distance in their case of only 21.5 km.³² They account for almost a quarter of 1901-1910 marriages: living almost exclusively at No. 100, they are the ones who explain the overall decline in origin differential at that period. If anything, this data suggests that people from Southern Italy, present in the buildings from 1898, remained for a long time among themselves when it came to picking a spouse. Even more so than for Alsatians and Lorrainers, language must have played a part in that dynamic.³³ A sense of origin-based solidarity must have been causing, and resulting from, those geographically endogamous unions.

It should be noted, however, that despite its small radius, this regional endogamy had a larger perimeter in the Plaine-Saint-Denis than in the homeland. In other words, the Cassino-Sora region only took hold as a relevant geometry of solidarity in the immigration context. This appears clearly when we examine a few dozens of marriages of residents that were celebrated in Southern Italy, either before, during or after their sojourn at 96-102 Av. de Paris. The overwhelming majority of those unions, of which half involved single men returning home both to accomplish military service and find a spouse, happened between people of the exact same village –which, by the way, was less the case for Alsatians and Lorrainers, whose glass-related migrations had accustomed them to finding spouses all over their region of origin.³⁴

This expansion of regional solidarity in the immigration context has been overlooked by scholars who, because of their focus on the emergence of national

³² A significant difference in the origins of the spouses' families can be found in only two marriages of those residents. Those occurred in 1923 and 1927, each time with someone whose family originated from Alsace-Lorraine.

³³ See below, p. 279 *sqq.*

³⁴ 28 out of 34 marriages of future or past residents of the cités celebrated in Southern Italy involved two spouses from the exact same village, and just one featured a distance greater than 10 km. For Alsatians and Lorrainers, the proportion is 15 out of 35. See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends," tabs "Marriages in Southern Italy" and "Marriages in Alsace and Lorraine."

identifications, have tended to take regional affinities for granted.³⁵ Speaking of national identifications, we can only conclude, for the residents from the southern Apennines, to a regional endogamy. Indeed, none of their marriages in Saint-Denis took place with fellow nationals from other regions of the peninsula who, despite being much fewer, were present in the area and in the tenement.³⁶

The picture looks strikingly different for residents from Spanish provinces. No matter which area of origin we look at, almost all of their spouses who did not come from the exact same location –which was also the norm back in the village³⁷– came from other Spanish provinces. Residents from the Tagus valley (Extremeños in particular) did not feature in the most endogamous regions in the table above for a reason. Not only did they marry disproportionately outside of their strict area of origin, but when they did, close to 90% of those exogamous unions happened with people from other regions of Spain.³⁸ The inference here is that for Spanish residents, marriages were much sooner mixed in terms of cross-provincial reach, which could suggest a greater relevance of national solidarity than for their southern Italian counterparts.³⁹

³⁵ For a few examples, see Charles Tilly, “Transplanted networks,” in Virginia Yans-McLaughlin (ed.), *Immigration Reconsidered: History, Sociology, and Politics*, New York (NY): Oxford University Press, 1990, 85; Stefano Luconi, “Becoming Italian in the US: Through the Lens of Life Narratives,” *MELUS*, Vol. 29 (2004), Nos. 3/4, 151–64; Philip Otterness, *Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine migration to New York*, Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press, 2004.

³⁶ See below, p. 268 *sqq.*

³⁷ See e.g. for the Montaña de Burgos, Aitor Lizarazu Pérez, *Merindades: la cuna de Castilla: Merindad de Valdeporres, Villavés y sus alrededores: Villavés, pueblo millenario*, 2011–13, 45.

³⁸ The figures are 19 unions, of which 16 were exogamous: 14 of those happened with other Spaniards, the other two featured a spouse born in France, in both cases Paris, in 1921 and 1930. Three other high-differential marriages, if we will, involved Spanish residents after the First World War: men from the provinces of Oviedo, León and Murcia married women from Aubervilliers, Paris, and Hautmont, in the Nord, respectively. AD93, 1E66/334, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1918, No. 173; 1E66/337, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1920, No. 226; 1E66/346, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1924, No. 62.

³⁹ Bottom-up insights about ethno-cultural diversity and homogeneity in Spain and Italy in the 19th and 20th centuries remain scarce. See Donna R. Gabaccia, *Italy's Many Diasporas*, London: Routledge, 2000; Pablo Alonso-González, “Race and Ethnicity in the Construction of the Nation in Spain: The Case of the Maragatos,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 39 (2016), No. 4, 614–33.

No other area stands out with significant geographic endogamy in our data.⁴⁰ The limited size, in the Plaine, of cohorts from certain origins, whose members had no real pool of “countrymen” to tap into, certainly accounts for part of these more open patterns.

Non-marital affairs

One may wonder whether family pressure, and the social function of weddings as perennial alliances, were at play when residents married with people of the exact same origin. More clarity can be found in out-of-wedlock relationships. Aggregating information from civil registers, police records and censuses, we were able to build a sample of 30 non-marital relationships involving at least one resident of the tenement at 96-102 Av. de Paris.⁴¹

The numbers overall are roughly similar to the statistics on the residents’ marriages.⁴² This is all the more notable since two thirds of those pre- and extramarital affairs date to the interwar period, which, as we have said, features a higher degree of marriage exogamy. This equivalence would suggest a limited outside pressure on

⁴⁰ For example, only 9% of marriages featuring residents of the northernmost districts of France and Belgium, happened between people originating from places less than 50 km apart. It would be remiss of us to forget the Oise district, which stood out in the table of the low-differential districts. One should probably not read too much into its figure, though, as it derives only from five marriages, of which three happened between a spouse born in Oise and someone coming from the Paris area, thus explaining the rather short distances. Similarly, the sample of marriages is too meagre in our data to suggest, on its own, whether Breton residents of the cités may also have displayed a strong sense of localism that could hint at an origin-based identification (although this may well have been the case): 4 out of 6 residents from Brittany who got married did so with someone coming from a place less than 50 km away from their own birthplace.

⁴¹ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, “Spouses and friends,” tab “Unwedded couples and affairs.” We counted as pregnancies regularised by marriages the instances in which, first, babies were born less than three months after the wedding, and second, children were legitimised by marriages (keeping in mind the caveat that an indefinite proportion of the children recognised at weddings were not the actual children of the men who henceforth became their legal fathers). Police records provide details about extramarital affairs, concubinages and relationships between youths. In censuses, some households comprise both a “head” and a “friend” of opposite genders.

⁴² Of those relationships, 40% happened between people coming from places separated by more than 50 km, and 26.7% from towns more than 300 km apart, with a median distance of 117.70 km.

residents to marry into a particular group. On the face of it, it does not seem that, outside of marriage, the putatively greater agency of residents in choosing their partner translated into a greater openness as to where their partner or lover came from. At the same time, it is quite plausible that residents internalised the constraints and knew they would face some form of social symbolic retribution if they became involved, even casually, with someone perceived as being from outside the acceptable group.

A closer look into unmarried relationships does hint, however, at a somewhat higher degree of diversity compared to marriages. First, relationships between people with origins very far apart were significantly more frequent than marriages of the same sort: more than 16% of lovers have an origin differential above 700 km, against only 6.2% for spouses. Men born in Bavarian Palatinate, Eastern Flanders, Mosel, Greek Anatolia, and Paris were respectively involved with women from Somme, Nord, Côtes-du-Nord, Saint-Denis, and Valais, in Switzerland. Once again, it is people from the Burgos province and Southern Italy who drove the diversity down: of the twelve relationships with an origin differential below 50 km, nine occurred between lovers who both came from one of those two regions.⁴³

The case of Umberto Reale, from Arpino, is illustrative of the difficulty to assess the relevance of origin outside of wedlock. A first cousin of the glassworker mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Umberto had arrived at No. 100 at age 12 in 1899.⁴⁴ He certainly spoke perfect French by the time he became involved in a relationship, in 1910 at the latest, with Maria Giacinta Fresilli, a 20-year-old from Pontecorvo, a town also in the province of Caserta. After she gave birth to their first son in January 1911,

⁴³ We must note, at this point, that all relationships and pregnancies were not culturally acceptable enough to be regularised by a wedding, which could make some cross-origin affairs all but invisible in the sources. The number of babies born to single mothers in the cités and not legitimised later, which were born at the frequency of 1 every 15 months, attests to the presence of a significant number of relationships which we have barely any means to know anything about.

⁴⁴ AD93, 4U7/995, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, audition of Angela Reale née Quaglieri, 16.08.1901, in Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, Dossier d'instruction No. 49750, *doc. cit.*

they married in June. In all likelihood, they had met as neighbours in the cités.⁴⁵ Their story illustrates the difficulty to determine what parameter was more relevant to their encounter and involvement. Was it their place of residence? Their common origin? Did Umberto and Maria Giacinta feel that they were not supposed, even as flirting youth, to mingle with people from outside their regional diasporas? Those questions remain hard to answer with accuracy.

3.1.2. Friends and acquaintances

A resident-witness database

Aside from marriages, another micro-quantitative tool is at our disposal to measure the importance of origins in people's affinities. At weddings, but also at declarations of births or deaths, witnesses had to be present.⁴⁶ As said before, a very large proportion of those witnesses were family members. A much tougher question is to know who exactly the others were, and would therefore qualify as friends or acquaintances.

In the effort to design a method to collect only eligible witnesses, we were helped by the specific context of the Plaine-Saint-Denis. The tenements at 96-102 Av. de Paris were miles away from Saint-Denis city hall. For that very reason, almost all witnesses referred to as "friends" or simply left with an undefined relationship to the resident, and whose address was located in the vicinity of city hall, can be taken out of the sample; there is very little chance that they had any actual relationship to the resident. As other historians have noticed, bar owners, craftsmen or even municipal and hospital

⁴⁵ We know that in 1909, Maria Giacinta was living with her parents and siblings at No. 100. See AD93, 1E66/267, Saint-Denis, births, 1911, Vol. 1, No. 51; 1E66/322, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1911, Vol. 1, No. 225; 1E66/318, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1909, Vol. 1, No. 402.

⁴⁶ Legal obligations in that respect were gradually loosened over time. Marriages only required two witnesses instead of four from September 1919, and from early 1924, declarations of births and deaths did not require a witness anymore.

employees, were routinely asked to fill in for parties lacking witnesses.⁴⁷ The particularity here is that we have a quite effective way of identifying, by their address, those eleventh-hour witnesses, and take them out of the friends' cohort. Symmetrically, the fact that people who are left in the corpus covered significant distances to accompany residents all the way to Saint-Denis city hall attests to the existence of something more than a mere casual bond of solidarity. This makes the data probably more interesting for our purpose than in other contexts with no equivalent spatial configuration.

Once a list of proper acquaintances is devised, the next step is to determine who they were and where they came from.⁴⁸ The outcome is a base of 835 couples of residents on the one side, and non-family, non-last-minute witnesses on the other, between 1882 and 1931.⁴⁹ Non-family witnesses were overwhelmingly chosen among neighbours. The median distance between the addresses of residents and those of their witnesses-friends, always specified in the registers, was a mere 80 meters.⁵⁰ For 604 pairs, we have been able to retrieve both places of origin, and thus calculate an origin differential. Altogether, this measure was inferior to 50 km in 46.1% of the cases, and superior to 300 km in 27.6% of the cases. Compared to the marriage data, this clearly indicates an even stronger preference for people of the same origin when it came to choosing a witness. Interestingly, one does not find a significant discrepancy between

⁴⁷ Vincent Gourdon, "Les témoins de mariage civil dans les villes européennes du XIX^e siècle : quel intérêt pour l'analyse des réseaux familiaux et sociaux?," *Histoire, économie & société*, Vol. 27 (2008), No. 2, 61–87.

⁴⁸ Civil, electoral, military registers, censuses, and genealogical databases allowed us to reconstruct a significant proportion of this missing information, about both witnesses and residents, whose geographic origin was mentioned only in marriage acts and some birth declarations (for foreigners), but not in each and every instance. As happens with incomplete data, the result is not free from biases, which warrants caution when manipulating the statistics. In particular, it proved significantly less possible to identify the precise origin of Spanish witnesses, given the homogeneity of Spanish surnames and a greater scarcity of individual records. That does not seem, however, to affect the final results in any significant way.

⁴⁹ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends," tab "All friends-witnesses."

⁵⁰ This is in line with Roger Gould's insights. See Roger Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune*, Chicago (IL), London: University of Chicago Press, 1995, 89–90.

genders. While female residents had in general fewer friends, this did not translate into tighter ethnic circles.⁵¹ A closer analysis of the data broadly confirms the chronological trends observed in marriages: a slow growth of diversity, interspersed with more rapid increases of origin differentials between residents and their witnesses, in the second half of the 1890s, in the late 1900s, and during the Great War.

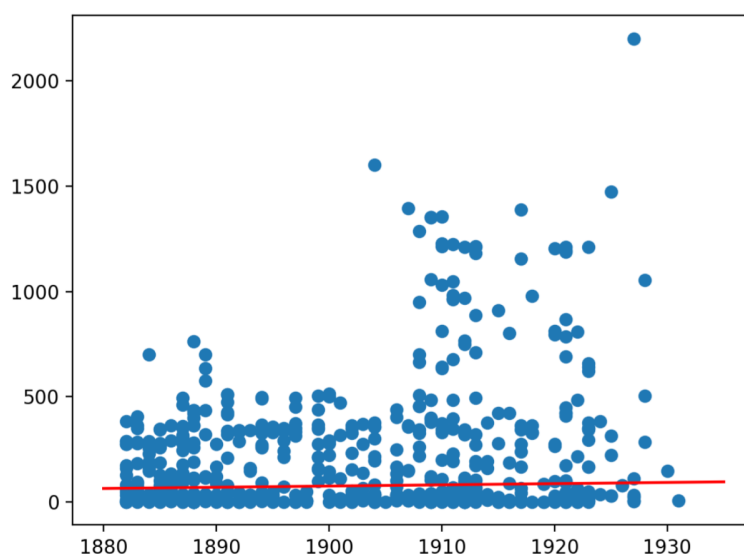


Figure 6: Origin differential between residents and their (filtered) witnesses (km)

⁵¹ Across the period, the median distance between the towns of origin of male residents and the women they married was 140 km, while the same metric for female residents yields 131.3 km. But on the other hand, the same indicator between the origins of female residents and their witness-friends was slightly greater than for men, 76.4 km against 71.65 km. It does seem, however, that women had fewer acquaintances than men, which would be consistent with the gender gap in terms of factory jobs and hence of colleagues (a connection observed, for a much later period, by Paul-Henri Chombard de Lauwe *et al.*, *Famille et habitation. II: Un essai d'observation expérimentale*, Paris: CNRS, 1960, 248). The filtering operations of our marriage data indeed yields a much smaller number of friends for brides than for grooms (127 against 224). In addition, the remaining friends of female residents may well have been connected to their family or their spouse rather than to the brides themselves: compared to men, female residents in our database had indeed a greater age differential with their witness-friends who were significantly older (-9 years against +1,2 years), and a lesser proportion of them were within the same age range (16.2% of the women's friends were 3 years apart or less from the women's age, compared to 25.3% for men's friends). It is true that the minimum age to be a witness, 21, may have excluded some of the women's actual friends who may have otherwise been chosen. One must also bear in mind another potentially misleading element: women's female friends were barely visible in the civil registers. After women were allowed to be witnesses in late 1897 (law of 7.12.1897), they made up less than a third of the female residents' friends, and much less than that if one excepts the particular period of the Great War.



Figure 7: The respective proportions of resident-witness origin differentials above and under 50 km (%)

As we did with spouses, let us now identify the areas of highest resident-witness endogamy. Here are the residents' districts of origin for which the median distance between residents and their (filtered) witnesses is inferior to 50 km: Caserta, Bas-Rhin, Meurthe, Cáceres, Campobasso, and Burgos.⁵² Starting from the geographic clusters that emerge from these rankings, we find that for residents from Alsace and Lorraine, 57.2% of witnesses came from less than 50 km. Of the witnesses who were not from their immediate region, 43% came from other parts of eastern France, one from Luxembourg, two from Bavarian Palatinate and 14 from the Greater Paris Area, of

⁵² Only districts with more than five values of origin differentials have been included. The median distances in km are: Caserta: 21.58; Bas-Rhin: 31;38; Meurthe: 31.77; Cáceres: 36.41; Campobasso: 38.36; Burgos: 47.98.

whom we know for a fact that 8 were born to parents from Alsace-Lorraine. In total, more than 80% of those residents' witnesses can be traced back to eastern regions.

Inhabitants of Nos. 96–102 from the Cassino-Sora area in central Italy were even more likely to pick their witnesses among fellow regionals. 79% of their witnesses came either from the same village or from one less than 50 km away; the proportion even peaked at 96,5% in their first decade of presence in the tenement. But as was the case with marriages, there is almost a clean discontinuity in origin differential between those inferior to 40 km and those greater than 800 km. In other words, statistics suggest the absence of a preference, when it came to choosing a witness, for fellow nationals from other parts of Italy over French people. In fact, just one witness was in that case, a man born in Tuscany. Among their witnesses born in France, we know with certainty that 38% (8 of 21) were born into families from the Cassino-Sora region. In the end, the overall share of witnesses either first or second generation from the exact same area stands at 85.7%.

Trends observed for Spanish-born spouses are also confirmed by the resident-witness data. For natives of the Montaña de Burgos, 68.1% of resident-witness differentials were lower than 50 km, with that proportion decreasing over the first two decades of their presence in the buildings.⁵³ Of witnesses who were not from their immediate region, 8 from 14 came from other regions of Spain, and the other 6 from France and Alsace-Lorraine. As for residents from the Tagus valley, they were three times more inclined to pick witnesses than spouses from their exact same region.⁵⁴ And yet once again, the most relevant figure is the number of witnesses who were not from their region, but still from Spain: 10 out of 17. The others came from France and one from Italy. In short, when Spanish residents had to select who would accompany them

⁵³ 1908-1917: 17/24; 1918-1927: 11/18. Note that distances between villages in the north of the province and Burgos have been counted as lower than 50 km, because residents from those parts often declared Burgos (in particular in the censuses) as their place of origin when they came in fact from the Merindades.

⁵⁴ 46.8% came from less than 50 km away, against only 15.8% of their spouses.

to city hall and would not pick someone from their micro-area of origin, they displayed a clear preference for their fellow nationals over their other neighbours.

Scattered information about friendships in law enforcement records and the press are generally consistent with this data.⁵⁵ When considered together, statistics on spouses and witnesses reveal a slow increase in geographic exogamy over the half-century under scrutiny. It also leads to considering origin-based solidarity as more relevant for some cohorts of residents –Southern Italians, Alsatians and Lorrainers, Spaniards– whose regional bonds appeared disproportionately stronger than those of their neighbours from other areas. For all these subsets of residents, both geographic endogamy and friendships between “compatriots” seem to have declined over time, especially after the Great War, but remained a defining factor in their networks’ configuration throughout. For residents from Spanish regions, the data suggests that this origin-based dynamic took place at an ethnonational dimension. For others, like Casertani, Molisani, Alsatians and Lorrainers, the relevant geographic referential seems to have been of much lesser dimensions, while probably larger than the usual matching area back home.

Ethnonational networks?

These statistical snapshots should now be fleshed out using qualitative evidence. Individual stories confirm, first, that residents from the provinces of Caserta and Campobasso, beyond their traditional ties with families from the same area, displayed less inter-regional solidarity than their counterparts from Spanish provinces. It is possible that more had arrived in Saint-Denis with already existing friendships. Luigi

⁵⁵ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, “Spouses and friends,” tab “Friends (press + LE).” Instances of residents arrested together by the police, or mentioned along with people called to testify in their favour in civil disputes at the *Justice de paix* (or the other way around) are not infrequent in the sources. We found 121 of such pairs, and were able to identify the exact origin of both members three quarters of the time. On average, origin differentials between these “friendly” pairs in the second half of the period were twice higher than in the first half: another clue of a declining relevance of origin with younger generations of residents and for those who had been in Saint-Denis for long enough.

Caruso and the Gabriele brothers, from Arpino, who were neighbours at No. 100 in 1911, had travelled together to New York in 1903.⁵⁶ Luigi Pirolli and Benedetto Tedeschi, who had been reunited at the same address and at Legras in the early 1900s, had spent their childhood a few yards apart in Italy.⁵⁷

Regarding Casertani and Molisani, it must be said that their fellow nationals in the Plaine-Saint-Denis were overwhelmingly from the same region, which makes the question of their inclination to mingle with Italians in general more difficult to answer. But some counter-examples in which Casertani and non-Casertani belonged to the same networks suggest that it was indeed possible to find fellow nationals from other regions. Dominique Carbone, born in 1885 in Pontecorvo, in the province of Caserta, had been a resident at No. 100 since 1902 when he got arrested with friends for unruly conduct on a Friday night of November 1912. His drinking party that night was made of colleagues from the glassworks.⁵⁸ One of his friends was Jean-Baptiste Blandino, who was born in Piedmont, in a village about 25 miles outside from Turin in the lower Val di Susa. Blandino had set foot in France in mid-1909, and had lived at No. 100 for a while until mid-1911, and had come back to live there again in 1912.⁵⁹ The other people arrested alongside Dominique included a cousin of his, who was currently staying at his place as a lodger, and two 17-year-old glassworkers, one from Lorraine living a little further North in the Plaine, and the other originally from Paris and living

⁵⁶ National Archives at Washington D.C., Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36, *Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1897-1957*, microfilm publication T715, roll No. 368, ship *Phoenicia*, 19.06.1903 (accessed via Ancestry.com).

⁵⁷ Benedetto was born in Demanio the same year as Luigi, lived in the same building in the Plaine, worked at the same factory, would leave for military service at the same time, and would be a witness at Luigi's wedding and at the birth of his son. See ASC Pozzilli, 1886, births, No. 84, 12.10.1886, Benedetto Tedeschi di Agostino; Lista di leva, 1886, No. 43, Tedeschi Benedetto and No. 31, Pirolli Luigi; FNA, BB/11/13343, 26126 x 30, Benoît (Benedetto) Tedeschi and FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis Pirolli; AD93, 1E66/321, Saint-Denis, marriages, 25.06.1910; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1910, No. 34, 25.06.1910; AD93, 1E66/274, Saint-Denis, births, 1914, vol. 2, No. 836, 29.06.1914.

⁵⁸ On the gallicisation of first names, see chapter 4.

⁵⁹ *Le Matin*, 26.11.1912; FNA, BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27, Dominique Antoine Carbone; FNA, BB/11/12662, 37933 x 29, Jean-Baptiste Blandino.

across the canal, in central Saint-Denis. It is unclear how close Dominique may have been to those two colleagues. What we do know is that he and Blandino were friends.⁶⁰

But that did not necessarily mean that non-Casertani Italians occupied a preferential place in Dominique's solidarity networks, which revolved primarily around people from his own micro-region. Outside of his relatives, we know of five of Dominique's witnesses, and of six people for whom he acted as a witness over a period of twenty years.⁶¹ Of those eleven people, nine came from the Cassino-Sora area –as did his wife Domenica whom he met and married in Saint-Denis– and two from French regions in 1913 and 1916. The latter were probably colleagues of his, since their craft, iron casting, was the same as his in those years.⁶²

As for Blandino, Dominique's friend from Piedmont, his marriage in the summer of 1911 to a young woman from one of the better-implemented Casertan families in the Plaine, was probably as much a testimony as an accelerator of his social ties with families from the Cassino-Sora area.⁶³ It certainly distinguished him from average Piemontesi, and he was no outsider to Dominique's usual networks. A couple of months before his marriage, Blandino had been seen playing cards with another Casertan neighbour of his at No. 100.⁶⁴ What may have distinguished Blandino was that he was probably already fluent in French and moved in social circles that were perhaps more diverse than Dominique's. An indication of that is that in 1913, shortly after the death of his first wife, Blandino would remarry with a French-born woman

⁶⁰ Dominique's cousin Joachim Joseph Caramadre, also from Pontecorvo, was himself friends with another migrant from Piedmont, Giovanni Battista Olivero (see APP, CB 92.5, 1909/917, 10.10.1909; FNA, BB/11/10307, 29113 x 27).

⁶¹ That is, leaving once again aside the occasional witnesses from the city centre.

⁶² AD93, 1E66/261, Saint-Denis, births, 1908, vol. 1, No. 219, Jean Mella; 1E66/262, Saint-Denis, births, 1909, vol. 1, No. 729, Marie Louise Antoinette Tarsia; AD93, 1E66/266, Saint-Denis, births, 1910, vol. 2, No. 1397, Alfred François; 1E66/322, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1911, Vol. 1, No. 225, Humbert Reale and Maria Hyacinthe Frésilli; AD93, 1E66/327, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1913, Vol. 2, No. 543, Dominique Antoine Carbone and Dominique Cocorocchia;

⁶³ AD93, 1E66/323, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1911, Vol. 2, No. 451, 5.08.1911; AD93, 1E66/372, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1912, No. 590, 26.05.1912, Émilie Gabriele.

⁶⁴ APP, CB 92.7, 1911/693, 24.06.1911.

from Oise.⁶⁵ He was well aware himself that his first marriage to a Casertan could have been interpreted as a sign of Italianness that did not reflect his integration trajectory. In his naturalisation request of 1929, he would leave this first union in the shadow, only mentioning his second and third marriages to French-born women.⁶⁶

Spanish residents' networks overwhelmingly featured fellow nationals, but their relations with people from other origins would gradually increase as well. In the late 1920s, Leandro García, a resident from the north of Burgos province who had been living at No. 100 for a few years, became friends with the family of Tommaso Greco, from the Cassino area. They would often meet at the bar and play cards together, and their children forged long-lasting friendships.⁶⁷ The Garcías were also friendly with other neighbours from Italy, the Pontes. Born in Genoa and Pisa respectively, husband and wife had been residents at No. 100 since at least 1911. Mme Ponte became close enough to the Garcías to become the godmother of two of their children in the early 1930s.⁶⁸

It is possible that residents from the Montaña de Burgos like the Garcías, who arrived earlier and in fewer numbers in the neighbourhood than their counterparts from other regions of Spain, had had more incentive to speak French and mingle with non-Spanish people, in particular during and after the First World War.⁶⁹ Another example, that of Paulino Diez, would tend to reinforce this hypothesis. A migrant from the Burgos area who lived around the corner from the cités, Paulino chose in 1921 as witnesses for the declaration of birth of his first son, two residents from No. 96: a

⁶⁵ AD93, 1E66/326, Saint-Denis, marriages - 1913, Vol. 1, No. 104, 22.02.1913; FNA, BB/11/12662, 37933 x 29, Jean-Baptiste Blandino.

⁶⁶ FNA, BB/11/12662, *doc. cit.*, Letter from Jean-Baptiste Blandino to the Justice Minister, 12.03.1929.

⁶⁷ Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016.

⁶⁸ Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 26/5, Real Patronato español de Santa Teresa de Jesús, baptisms, vol. 2, 1932, No. 71; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, baptisms, 1936, No. 99, 16.10.1936.

⁶⁹ That such a tendency did not emerge from the serial data on spouses and witnesses could be due to an insufficient number of entries.

painter from Paris, and a glassworker from the Nord. We know that Paulino's father, brothers and cousins had been living at No. 100 in 1911, and his family's ties to those French residents probably dated to those years. In particular, the glassworker may have been friends with Paulino's father, since both were roughly the same age and had been colleagues at Legras.⁷⁰

Sources documenting ties between residents from Extremadura and non-Spanish people are comparatively rarer in the 1910s and 1920s. Not that they were totally absent though, especially among children. Henri Abel, 14, from Haute-Saône, and François Greco, 12, from the province of Caserta, must have been friends with the children of Mme Moreno, from the province of Cáceres, at No. 96. On three separate occasions in the winter of 1918, they would sell her objects they had stolen.⁷¹ François Greco, in particular, had been living at No. 100 in the early 1910s, and could have known the Morenos, who were already at No. 96 before the war, for a few years.⁷²

That last example suggests that age and gender delineations could easily trump ethnicity, as studies in social psychology have indicated for present-day societies.⁷³ Despite its limited character, the data collected from law enforcement sources seems to point to a higher rate of mixed origin friendships in the inhabitants' youngest age group.⁷⁴ At the turn of the century, children would play together on the avenue, in the

⁷⁰ AD93, 1E66/340, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, marriages, 1921 (Jan.-June), No. 1, 4.01.1921; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1921, 4.01.1921, No. 1; AD 93, 1E66/284, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, births, 1921, No. 1382, 11.09.1921.

⁷¹ APP, CB 92.14, 1918/305, 26.02.1918; 1918/361, 6.03.1918.

⁷² SDMA, 1F21, 1911 Census, 100 Av. de Paris, Francesco Greco; AD93, 1E66/274, Saint-Denis, births, 1914, vol. 2, No. 833 (and also, for Mr. Moreno's presence at No. 96 as early as 1913: AD93, 1E66/326, Saint-Denis, marriages - 1913, Vol. 1, No. 264). This cross-origin openness could be corroborated by the fact that Eusebio, one of Mme Moreno's sons, would be later seen mingling with men of Casertan and Parisian origins (APP, CB 92.18, 1921/830, 25-26.09.1921).

⁷³ See e.g. Melanie Killen, Jennie Lee-Kim, Heidi McGlothlin, Charles Stangor and Charles C. Helwig, "How Children and Adolescents Evaluate Gender and Racial Exclusion," *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, Vol. 67 (2002), No. 4, i-viii, 1-129.

⁷⁴ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends," tab "Friends (press + LE)." The median distance between birthplaces of residents aged 15 or less and their friends was more than 25% greater than that between the pairs that included a resident aged 16 or more. In our data, the only

streets, in the courtyards of the cités.⁷⁵ The Great War only increased the possibility of friendships between children from diverse backgrounds.⁷⁶ But the expansion of networks was not confined to the youngest residents, as newcomers flocked to the Plaine in great numbers and diversified even more the Plaine demography.⁷⁷

Lodgers

We have said in the first chapter that ethnic solidarity was hard to infer from the distribution of residents within the tenement block.⁷⁸ Another set of information related to housing brings much more significant results: the comparison between the origins of families and the paying lodgers they would take in. The practice of hosting lodgers was common in the Paris area as a way of supplementing working families' income. At No. 96 and No. 100 Av. de Paris, it was constant throughout our period.⁷⁹ In 1922, for instance, a resident at No. 96 who probably paid a rent of 600 to 700 fr. per trimester charged each of her lodgers 8 fr. a day for board and lodging.⁸⁰ Pending an administrative authorisation –which many neglected to request– running a *garni** entailed hygiene requirements, registration of the lodgers' identities and times of stay,

resident-friend pair under 15, whose origins were similar but who had not been born in the Paris area to migrant parents, came from the north of the Jura district: see APP, CB 92.2, 1906/6, 28.12.1905.

⁷⁵ As evidenced by an incident of 1893 in which two young girls, aged 6 and 8, along with a friend from No. 133, were injured by the crumbling of a wall at No. 100: *La Croix*, 26.04.1893, *JSD*, 30.04.1893. See also chapter 1, p. 109.

⁷⁶ See Fabrice Langrognet, "Contingent Minorities: What the Great War Meant for the Children of the Plaine-Saint-Denis," *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, Vol. 11 (2018), No. 2, 208–26. Unmentioned in that article is an episode in which scores of boys were arrested for taking free rides on the bumpers of trams in the Plaine-Saint-Denis. Among the thirty-two boys caught in December 1915, six were born in Spain –three of whom lived at No. 96 and one at No. 100 Av. de Paris–, one in Russia, one in Poland, one in Italy –also a resident at No. 96–, three in Brittany, one in the South of France, seven in the occupied districts of northern France, three in Belgium and nine in the Paris area, including Antoine Pirolli, a 13-year-old resident at No. 100 born in Saint-Denis to parents from the Cassino area (see *JSD*, 30.01.1916; APP, CB 92.12, 1915/923, 8.12.1915; 1915/929, 10.12.1915; 1915/966, 19-20.12.1915; 1915/1000; 1916/84).

⁷⁷ Fabrice Langrognet, "Accueil et représentations des migrants en temps de guerre: les étrangers à la Plaine-Saint-Denis (1914-1919)," *Migrance*, No. 45–6 (2016), 161–72.

⁷⁸ Chapter 1, p. 130–1.

⁷⁹ Alain Faure, Claire Lévy-Vroelant, *op. cit.*

⁸⁰ APP, CB 92.18, 1922/558-559, 29.06.1922; www.paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Rent prices."

and limits on their numbers. All of those rules were often flouted in the cités.⁸¹ In police, judicial, and census records, we have been able to retrieve some information about 126 lodgers mentioned at either No. 96 or 100.⁸² In 101 of those cases, it has been possible to identify the country of origin of both the tenant and the lodger, and in 78 even the districts of birth. 62% of the time, both came from the same district.

The only two tenants who took in boarders from not only another district, but another country than their own were Thomas Reale and Bonaventura Pirolli. Both cases are noteworthy, as they may reveal an increasing openness, perhaps reflecting the expansion of their networks and their mastery of French. In 1902, Thomas Reale and his wife Angela –the parents of the Umberto mentioned earlier– were renting accommodation to Antonio Reale, their relative, from Arpino.⁸³ Many years later, in 1931, at 80 years of age, Thomas would be renting a room to two French teenagers born in the Paris area. As for Bonaventura, his guesthouse activity at No. 100 is documented since the early 1900s. As far as we know, his lodgers between 1903 and 1909 were all Italian, and most probably Casertani. In 1911 though, his three lodgers were from Brittany, Paris, and Normandy.⁸⁴ That growing diversity in terms of geographic origins hints at a declining role, in both families' networks, of regional solidarity.

Lodgers who did not initially belong to the residents' circles could be allowed to join them after a while. One of Bonaventura's daughters ended up marrying the lodger

⁸¹ For a few examples of residents fined for not observing those rules, see AD93, 4U7/929, 957, 966, 975, 981, 999, 1008, 1026, *procès-verbaux* c. Fixary, Fontaine, Carlesimo, Rodi, Tedeschi, Reale, Venditelli, Pirolli, Rotondo, Palma, Verrecchia, 7.04.1893, 22.12.1896, 18.11.1897, 23.01.1899, 18.01.1900, 24.07.1902, 25.07.1902, 23.02.1903, 1.10.1903, 5.10.1903, 22.10.1907.

⁸² See *paris-tenement.eu*, additional data, "Lodgers."

⁸³ AD93, 4U7/999, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, *Procès-verbal* c. Thomas Real (sic), 24.07.1902; SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census, 100 Av. Wilson.

⁸⁴ AD93, 4U7/1003, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, *Procès-verbal* du 23.02.1903 c. Bonaventure Pirolli; AD93, 4U7/1031, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, *Procès-verbal* du 22.06.1909 c. Bonaventure Pirolli; APP, CB 92.5, 1909/503, 19.06.1909; SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 100 Av. de Paris.

from Normandy, and bore his child in 1918. That former lodger, who mingled with fellow workers from Brittany or Saône-et-Loire, remained close to his wife's family, in particular to his brother-in-law.⁸⁵ This type of entry into family networks was not unprecedented in the buildings. One of Saverio Tari's lodgers in 1901, who had arrived from Marseille the year before to work at Legras, would go on two years later to marry his host's daughter, also employed at the glass factory.⁸⁶ But in that case, the groom and bride were originally from the exact same village in southern Italy, and the lodger may have belonged to a family with which the Taris were already connected, if not akin, in the first place. Finally, evidence also suggests that lodgers, among themselves, could forge bonds of friendship, adding yet another opportunity of inter-ethnic ties.⁸⁷ All in all, available information on tenants and lodgers highlights the status of origin-based solidarity in that particular aspect of the residents' lives. When it mattered, it was related to family and regional levels, and could be superseded, over time, by other drivers of mutual appreciation.

3.1.3. Common grounds

Jobs

Class-based and professional bonds could intersect with networks based on kinship or origin.⁸⁸ In certain crafts, like glassworks or foundry, families had alliances going back decades. When Joseph Isz, a resident at No. 100 employed at Legras since 1879,

⁸⁵ See SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, vol. 1, and 1F33, 1931 census, 100 Av. de Paris; APP, CB 92.12, 1916/564, 28.06.1916; CB 92.17, 1921/120, 7.02.1921; CB 92.19, 1923/942, 8-13.08.1923; AD93, 1E66/350, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1926, vol. 1, No. 260; APP, CB 92.29, 1933/35, 9.01.1933; AD76, 4E11725, 1886-1887, Les Essarts-Varimpré, 1887, births, 27.08.1887, No.18.

⁸⁶ SDMA, 1F21, 1901 census, 100 Av. de Paris, Patriarca Rocco-Arcangelo ("Patuarca Angèle"); FNA, 27752 x 26, BB/11/9695, Roch-Archange Patriarca.

⁸⁷ APP, CB 92.20, 1923/1555, 15.12.1923.

⁸⁸ The point here is not to look at the mentality of residents as a group, along the lines of Richard Hoggart's famous study, but rather to determine what could bind residents together. See Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy: Aspects of Working-Class Life, With Special References to Publications and Entertainments*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1957.

married Catherine Offner a few years later, their union was just one in a long series of matrimonial alliances between their families.⁸⁹ One of their sons would later marry a Doerflinger, from another ancient clan in the industry, that had branches all the way to the American glassworks' sector.⁹⁰ Only recently had the tradition of reserving apprenticeship, in glass factories, to one's own relatives been abandoned.⁹¹ The name and birthplace of Alsatians and Lorrainers could in itself be a valuable currency and secure a job: some residents joined Legras despite having no experience in the trade, but probably because they bore a well-known name in the business.⁹²

Professional solidarity needed not be that ancient to be relevant in people's networks. Statistics from our resident-witness analysis shows that about a third of residents and their friends who accompanied them to city hall worked in the same profession –and surely all were not long-time colleagues.⁹³ In the glassmaking world, hierarchies were strong and well-established. Age and qualifications were dominant factors, with a cascade of authority coming down from the *chef de place* to the *souffleurs*, *grands gamins*, and *gamins*.⁹⁴ At the beginning of our period, those hierarchies and socio-economic contrasts seem to have partly followed lines of origins, as men from the Eastern regions occupied the most qualified positions. But that changed over time. Not only did the material situation of the lower-paid workers improve, as Jean-Paul Brunet has observed, but the qualified positions started to be

⁸⁹ SDMA, E252, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1887, No. 63, 26.02.1887; SDMA, CT96, Letter from the Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 22.11.1921. See on these families in glasswork history, *Éclats de verre*, No. 1 (May 2003).

⁹⁰ AD93, 1E66/324, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, marriages - 1912, Vol. 1, No. 134, 9.03.1912; *New York Times*, "A Master Glassmaker's Legacy," 17.06.1890.

⁹¹ Charles Benoist, "Le travail dans la grande industrie," *Revue des deux mondes : recueil de la politique, de l'administration et des mœurs*, vol. LXXIII, 1.11.1903, 187.

⁹² Alsatian and Lorrainers bearing a familiar name in the glasswork industry secured jobs at Legras in the 1870s and 1880s, despite being former clogmakers. See chapter 2, note 42.

⁹³ This is the case in our data for 32.7% of the 835 pairs. This estimate has some degree of inaccuracy because of the many declared *journaliers**. But the distortion works both ways (two *journaliers* being counted as in the same craft, while two colleagues not being included, if one states *verrier* and the other *journalier*,* for instance). See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends," tab "All friends-witnesses."

⁹⁴ See Charles Benoist, *art. cit.*

held by more and more people from different backgrounds.⁹⁵ Factory bosses belonged to the upper class and had in principle no connection to ordinary workers. That is, if we except the affair that M. Legras's nephew had with a 19-year-old from No. 98 in the early 1880s; when the two finally married, the old mother of the bride, from Lorraine, remained a tenant at No. 100, but with probably a slightly improved status in the eyes of her neighbours.⁹⁶

As for class conflicts, they were not frequent at Legras and Mouton compared to other factories.⁹⁷ They were certainly not the prime experience to unite residents of different origins. Until 1905, the Plaine glassworkers did not have a union of their own.⁹⁸ Once it was founded, some women seem to have planned to join, but it is

⁹⁵ For Jean-Paul Brunet's comment, see "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 1116–7. Qualified glassworkers ("*chefs de place*") at Legras's were disproportionately from Alsace and Lorraine until the Great War. As for foremen, they also included a sizable proportion of men from the East, like Henri Rolland (1890s-1920s), from Haute-Marne, who had joined the factory in 1879; Marie Auguste Poulet (1900s) and Louis Constant Pernot (1910s), both from Vosges; Pierre Keiskopff (1910s), born in Saint-Denis into an Alsatian family. But these enviable positions started being occupied by foreigners, like Benjamin Émond and Pierre Cyprien Krebs (1900s), both from Belgium; and later Louis Pirolli (1920s), from Pozzilli, Italy. Rolland, Keiskopff and Pirolli had all joined the factory in their teens. At Mouton's, no particular region stood out among foremen, and Émile Ernest Thémé (1890s-1920s), from Oise, was soon joined by Jean Kraus (1900s), from the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and Carmelo Ponte (1910s) from Genoa, resident at No. 100 Av. de Paris. See *JSD*, 28.12.1893; APP, CB 92.2, 1905/1199, 2.12.1905; 1906/493, 23.04.1906; CB 92.3, 1907/1369, 22.11.1907; CB 92.7, 1911/221, 3.08.1911; 1911/1085, 8.11.1911; CB 92.9, 1913/25, 5.01.1913; 1913/412, 7.05.1913; CB 92.17, 1921/508, 23.06.1921; AD60, RP 846, Military registers, 1893, No. 178, Thémé; SDMA, E237, Saint-Denis, births, 1883, No. 973, 17.08.1883, Keiskopff; AD Vosges 4E501/6-86440, Les Vallois, marriages, 1902, No. 2, 1.04.1901; AD 93, 1E66/363, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1903, No. 140, 5.02.1903; *Bulletin municipal officiel de la ville de Paris*, 7.02.1909, Vol. XXVIII (1909), No. 37, 660.

⁹⁶ AD93, 1E66/146, Saint-Denis, births, 1883, No. 1406, 5.12.1883; AVP, V4E 7652, Paris, 18th arr., 1891, marriages, No. 1443, 26.09.1891; SDMA, E291, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1895, No. 1321, 26.12.1895. On that score, foremen and team leaders were at times asked by ordinary workers to be their witnesses at city hall, irrespective of their origins: a Mosel-born resident of No. 100 asked his Breton foreman at Legras to be his witness at his wedding in 1897, or when in the early 1920s a qualified glassworker from Alsace and his son accompanied a Casertan, in charge of heating the ovens at the factory, all the way to city hall for the declaration of his newborn son (SDMA, E273, marriages, 2.01.1892-31.12.1892, No. 162, 14.05.1892; AD93, 1E66/288, Saint-Denis, births, 1923, No. 1670, 6.12.1923).

⁹⁷ At Legras, brief strikes took place in 1890 (*La Petite République*, 17.05.1890); between May 10 and 13, 1900 (see the related issues of the *JSD*) and between March 31 and April 11, 1920 (*Le Réveil des verriers*, April 1920).

⁹⁸ *Le Réveil des verriers*, 1.04.1893; *L'Émancipation*, 18.11.1905; *JSD*, 19.11.1905.

unclear how many actually did.⁹⁹ This is not to say that class solidarity was entirely absent. But for a long time, labour and political struggles only concerned small numbers of residents.¹⁰⁰

Beliefs

More than any political creed, Catholicism seems to have been one of the binding forces between neighbours, in particular between women, whose practice was more developed, according to consistent accounts from descendants.¹⁰¹ In the complete series of marriages celebrated at the Plaine's church between 1882 and 1925, we find that 49% of civil marriages of residents at 96-102 Av. de Paris were followed by a religious wedding there, and this figure probably omits multiple cases in which the religious celebration took place at another parish. Baptism rates were particularly high: 71.3% of the newborns whose births were declared at city hall by the residents between 1882 and 1902 were baptised at that same church; 76% in 1916; and 77% between 1923 and 1925.¹⁰² In 1899, a lot of Plainards from Alsace and Lorraine donated money to contribute to the building of a new church, which still stands today on the Avenue. Victor Spreisser's brother-in-law Émile, for instance, gave one franc.¹⁰³

A register of communions celebrated at the parish church from 1901 to 1915 provides evidence that the residents' children attended the youth club of the local parish together, further documenting the diversity of children's networks already alluded to. In May 1904, for instance, girls taking their first communion included at

⁹⁹ SDMA, 30Fi170, handwritten note on "Ouvrières de la verrerie Legras," photographic card, no date.

¹⁰⁰ On this point, see chapter 4.

¹⁰¹ Int. Bouchard (No. 16), 17.04.2016; Int. Besson (No. 27), 25.07.2016; Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016.

¹⁰² See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "General table 96-102," tab "Births."

¹⁰³ Archives of Seine-Saint-Denis diocese, 25.1.8, 3F, Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, 21010, "Diocèse de Paris, carnet de souscription pour la construction d'une église à la Plaine St-Denis. Paroisse de 12 000 âmes qui ne possède qu'une chapelle complètement délabrée."

least two No. 100 residents, one from Bergamo, the other born in Saint-Denis; the following year, the list included three neighbours from No. 96, two born in Saint-Denis, and another in Fraisans, Jura.¹⁰⁴ Maria Carmela Pirolli, Bonaventura's daughter, followed suit in 1907, and Victor Spreisser's daughter Marie, in 1909.¹⁰⁵ The 1912 male cohort was even more crowded with residents: at No. 96, one boy born in Saint-Denis, another in Nantes, a third in Paris to Italian-born parents; at No. 100, a boy from Arpino –the little brother of Umberto Reale– and another from Pontecorvo. It is true that some children did not wear the white berets of the patronage, but the red ones of a revolutionary youth group active in the early 1910s, of which an employee living for a time at No. 102 was the secretary.¹⁰⁶ But the latter group had certainly much fewer members. Catholicism was the norm in the cités, anticlericalism the exception.

In only rare cases did Italian families try to attend services in their own language.¹⁰⁷ In that respect again, they differed from their Spanish counterparts. The absence of Italian Catholic missions in Paris until the 1920s probably accelerated their integration.¹⁰⁸ While names of Casertani and Molisani residents are all well represented in the registers of communions celebrated at the local parish, that source does not bear a single name of Spanish origin. There were at least two reasons for this. First, before the Great War the few Spanish children from the Plaine had no spare time on Sundays –as mentioned earlier, most were asked by their *padrones* to go around

¹⁰⁴ Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, Paroisse Ste-Geneviève de la Plaine, "Listes annuelles des enfants qui ont fait leur première communion dans la paroisse, 1903-1915," with one additional list from 1901.

¹⁰⁵ *Id.*, list for 1907.

¹⁰⁶ See for an incident between the two groups, APP, CB 92.9, 1912/1036, 13.10.1912. The secretary of the *Pupilles socialistes de la Plaine-Saint-Denis* was a man named Charles Bricout. See SDMA, 1F27, 1911 census, vol. 1, 102 Av. de Paris; 2 I, CT533, Répertoire des associations dionysiennes [no date, after 1911].

¹⁰⁷ It seems, for instance, that the Italian born daughter of the padrone Giuseppe Carlesimo, resident at No. 100 in 1897–8, was confirmed by the papal nuncio (Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, Paroisse Ste-Geneviève de la Plaine, "Listes annuelles...", *doc. cit.*, list for 1906). It is unclear when or where the confirmation happened, as there was no nuncio in Paris from 1904, after the interruption of diplomatic relations between France and the Vatican.

¹⁰⁸ Luigi Taravella, "La pratique religieuse comme facteur d'intégration," in Pierre Milza, Pierre Antonio Bechelloni, Michel Dreyfus (eds.), *L'Intégration italienne en France: un siècle de présence italienne dans trois régions françaises: 1880-1980*, Brussels: Complexe, 1995, 71–83.

with *barquillos*.¹⁰⁹ Second, a Spanish mission opened in Paris in 1916, and after the war, a chapel and patronage were founded for the Spaniards in the Plaine in 1923, providing families with sermons in their own language.¹¹⁰ This would undoubtedly enhance ethno-national identifications of Spanish residents, even though it would also cater, here and there, to non-Spanish people, such as Catholic Greeks and Portuguese.¹¹¹

Language

The ability to communicate in a common language was critical to building or maintaining bonds of solidarity between “compatriots.”¹¹² Language has long been recognised by social scientists as a key component of ethnic construction, and the Plaine-Saint-Denis was certainly no exception.¹¹³ We know that in the 1890s, some Alsatians in the area could still be heard speaking “German” to each other; in fact, a German-sounding dialect quite different from high German.¹¹⁴ Most evidence suggests that they would commonly speak French though, albeit with an accent. Barbe Sommer, for instance, the long-time concierge at No. 96, is remembered in her family as having had a strong accent and, at least by the 1940s, would not speak continuously in dialect but sprinkle her French with dialectal words.¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ See chapter 2.

¹¹⁰ See chapter 4.

¹¹¹ Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 26/5, Real Patronato español de Santa Teresa de Jesús, baptisms, Vol. 2, 1931, No. 7, 4.01.1931; baptisms, Vol. 2, 1931, No. 8, 8.01.1931.

¹¹² The meaning of the word “compatriot” only gradually switched, in the Plaine, from referring to the “small homeland” to conveying a common nationality. Instances of the word in the 1890s were definitely regional, or local, in scope; by the end of the Great War, local sources use only the word in a national sense. See APP, CB 92.2, 1906/17, 5.01.1906; Jean Lemoine, “L’émigration bretonne à Paris,” *art. cit.*, 177; 366; APP, CB 92.13, 1917/90, 7.01.1917.

¹¹³ See Joshua A. Fishman, *Language in Sociocultural Change*, Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press, 1972; Howard Giles, *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations*, London: Academic Press, 1977; John R. Edwards, *Language, Society, Identity*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.

¹¹⁴ AD93, 4U7/522, 12.11.1895, Auger c. Wagner.

¹¹⁵ Int. Besson (No. 27), 25.07.2016.

Traces of the accent of Barbe's fellow residents from Alsace and Lorraine survives in the way their names or personal information were spelled in official documents. Censuses, despite the many misspellings due to the transcription by officials, reveal alterations that are very probably traceable to the direct pronunciation of the residents themselves: "Sommur," for "Sommer"; "Kihl," for "Kehl"; "Lintz," instead of "Lentz"; "Terher" for "Derhée."¹¹⁶ Court documents confirm these variations, which point to the endurance of Alsatian and Lorrainer dialect.¹¹⁷ Victor Sprisser's name seems to have been pronounced "Sprisser" by his father.¹¹⁸ By contrast later generations, who attended school in Saint-Denis from the 1880s, would only speak French and pronounce their names with a distinctively French accent. The name of Martin Winkler, an 18-year-old glassworker at Legras who had arrived at No. 96 from his native Lorraine at age 6 and had attended school in the Plaine, was recorded as "Vaincler" by the gendarmes.¹¹⁹

The situation was similar for Italians from the Sora-Cassino area. In the very first years, migrants would speak in Ciociaro dialect, sometimes referred to as "Napolitan,"¹²⁰ and could not necessarily make themselves understood, even in standard Italian. In 1901, a judge had trouble understanding Francesco Gallaccio, a resident at No. 100 from the Cassino area, despite the presence of an Italian

¹¹⁶ SDMA, 1F17, 1F19, 1F21, Saint-Denis censuses, 1886, 1891, 1896, Av. de Paris 96-102.

¹¹⁷ "Fister," "Kreiner," "Kirchwinck" stood for "Pfister," "Greiner," and "Kirschwing" respectively. See AD93, 4U7/457, 7.09.1883, Pfister ("Fister") c. Greiner ("Kreiner"); 4U7/624, 26.05.1904, Long c. Brouasse. In 1893, a resident at No. 100 born in Rosteig, Alsace, and whose first name would have been spelled Joseph (in French) or Josef (in German), signed a letter to the Justice Ministry spelling his name "Josuff" (FNA, BB/11/2755, 1362 x 93, Bastian).

¹¹⁸ AD93, 4U7/460, 16.01.1885, Offner c. Sprisser.

¹¹⁹ See FNA, BB/11/1586, 2466 x 81, Louis Winkler; SDMA, 1R20, La Plaine primary school, boys, 1885-1886; AD93, 4U7/921, Brigade de gendarmerie de Pierrefitte, Procès-verbal c. Jules Oswald, 26.05.1892.

¹²⁰ Galeazzo Sommi-Piccenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia...", *art. cit.*, 466. On dialects at the confines of Terra di Lavoro and Molise, see Manlio Cortellazzo (ed.), Ernesto Giammarco, *Profilo dei dialetti italiani-Abruzzo*, Pisa: CNR Pacini, 1979; Francesco Avolio, *Bommèspre. Profilo linguistico dell'Italia centro-meridionale*, San Severo: Gerni Editore, 1995.

interpreter.¹²¹ In those years, young Casertani in the cités were not fluent in either of the two national languages, and grew up developing their own, mixed combination of French and the dialect of their region of origin. A witness in 1898 describes Antonio Capuano as “barely able to speak his dialect.”¹²² Another, first-hand account in 1901 mentions the “polyglot lisp” of one of them, erroneously identifying the boy as a young Calabrese.¹²³ In 1898, it was the soon-to-be infamous *padrone* Donato Vozza who offered his translation services to fellow glassworkers at the police station¹²⁴; unlike the children under his watch, who had not been able to “say a word” of French upon arrival,¹²⁵ he had already several years of practice, having lived in the Lyon area before heading to Saint-Denis.

But if the dialect probably remained for a long time the language of intimacy,¹²⁶ many first-generation Casertani and Molisani seem to have picked up French rather quickly.¹²⁷ At the local court and the police station, most of them had no problem making themselves understood without the presence of a translator, although we can surmise that in some cases, judges and police officers might have received linguistic help from bilingual individuals who were not mentioned on the official registers. This does not mean that language barriers could not be feigned when necessary. A former resident, born in Saint-Denis to parents from Arpino in 1911, could make himself perfectly understood when he asked an official at the electoral bureau if he could vote on behalf of a friend; the official’s claim that he had not understood the question was

¹²¹ AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, dossier d’instruction No. 49750, *doc. cit.*, procès-verbaux de premières comparutions devant Louis Berr, juge d’instruction, 18.09.1901.

¹²² Giovanni Tassani (ed.), Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, *Parigi 1898, op. cit.*, 98–9 (23.03.1898).

¹²³ *Le Matin*, 2.07.1901.

¹²⁴ *JSD*, 7.04.1898.

¹²⁵ *L’Aurore*, 24.07.1898.

¹²⁶ On this point, see Pierine Piras, “Les cousins d’Amérique: à Mamaroneck (NY) comme à Villeurbanne, on pense à Roccasecca,” *Le Monde alpin et rhodanien: revue régionale d’ethnologie*, 1989, No. 3-4, 23–32.

¹²⁷ “*Personne ne m’a jamais parlé italien*,” remembered the 1937-born grandson of a resident at No. 100. Int. Lorino (No. 14), 30.09.2016 (“nobody ever talked to me in Italian”).

certainly unconvincing.¹²⁸ As for the padrone Carlesimo, he also pretended not to speak French when it suited him to dodge questions by the police.¹²⁹

A perfect command of French became a precious asset for those Italian residents who went up the ranks of their factory, like Carmelo Ponte at Mouton and Louis Pirolli at Legras. An Italian-born woman from No. 102 even picked up Spanish from speaking with her neighbours.¹³⁰ Arrived at a later stage and in lesser numbers, Spaniards took more time to use French on a daily basis, which simultaneously contributed to, and resulted from, their higher tendency to mingle primarily with other Spanish speakers.¹³¹ But even when they kept speaking Castilian, their vocabulary denoted the influence of their French environment. One resident at No. 96 from the Montaña de Burgos came to use the expression “*tener galeta*” for having money. This was something he had picked up, according to the story he passed to his children, from Breton colleagues who were using the familiar form “*avoir de la galette*.”¹³²

Across the board, the main disparity with respect to language was a gender and generational gap, which resulted from a literacy imbalance. Migrant women of the first generation, especially older ones, had a much lower literacy rate than their husbands. Of the 145 people who were not able to sign the marriage registers on the occasion of the residents’ weddings over fifty years, more than half were the mothers of one of the two spouses, and over a half of those mothers came from Alsace and Lorraine, Spain or Italy. Based on the mentions in the registers documenting both the presence of the mothers at weddings and their inability to sign, the overall rate of literacy is 70.9% for Alsatian and Lorrainer mothers, 63.2% for mothers of spouses from the Cassino-Sora

¹²⁸ APP, CB 92.26, 1930/479, 22.03.1930.

¹²⁹ Compare APP, CB 92.1, 1905/41, 3.01.1905 with AD93, 4U7/1010, Procès-verbal c. Carlesimo Joseph, 28.03.1904 and AD93, 4U7/657, 14.06.1907, Carlesimo c. Pirolli.

¹³⁰ Int. Van Kerckhove (No. 54), 4.09.2016.

¹³¹ A resident at No. 96 was heard by the police through an interpreter in 1915: APP, CB 92.7, 1911/1085, 8.11.1911. See also APP, CB 82.14, 1915/552, 23.08.1915.

¹³² Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 24.07.2018.

area, and 55.2% for Spanish mothers.¹³³ Immigrant women in the tenement seem to have clinged to their dialects for a long time, only inserting foreign-sounding words at a slow pace.¹³⁴

The second generation had an easier time than their parents communicating with each other. Most of interviewees reported that the first generation of immigrants addressed their children in French, at least as far as the interwar period is concerned.¹³⁵ Parents would only revert to their native idiom when they did not want their children to understand. In the case of M. and Mme Mandagot, the hotel-owners at No. 102 from the late 1920s, that meant speaking in patois from Aveyron.¹³⁶

Discontinuous reports in the local newspapers of children obtaining their “*certificat d’études*” at the end of elementary school –a rather selective feat at the beginning of the twentieth century– hint at high rates of proficiency among the children of residents.¹³⁷ Alsatians and Lorrainers were the first to succeed; young Casertani and Molisani followed suit in the 1910s, and Spaniards in the 1920s. A steady flow of young residents from various backgrounds obtained their “*certif*” in subsequent years, attesting to the success of the local school in fostering integration and contacts across social and ethnic lines.¹³⁸ Their numbers bear witness to the importance laid on

¹³³ These figures include both the mothers of residents and the mothers of their spouses.

¹³⁴ About her mother Carolina Puzzuoli, a resident at No. 96 from Arpino, Mme Morvan said: “*Ma mère ne parlait ni français, ni italien.*” Int. Morvan (No. 18), 21.11.2016 (“my mother could speak neither French, nor Italian”). Note that the code-switching and bilingual discourse-marking of a later generation of Spanish women from the Plaine in the 1960s have been the object of a dissertation in linguistics. See David Scott Divita, “Acquisition as Becoming: An Ethnographic Study of Multilingual Style in la Petite Espagne,” doctoral diss. in romance languages and literatures, University of California Berkeley, 2010.

¹³⁵ Int. Hertzler (No. 35), 10.09.2016; Int. Lorino (No. 14), 30.09.2016; Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016.

¹³⁶ Int. Haussy (No. 32), 19.04.2016.

¹³⁷ Patrick Cabanel, *La République du certificat d’études: histoire et anthropologie d’un examen, XIX^e-XX^e siècles*, Paris: Belin, 2002.

¹³⁸ Graduates in later years include Marie Peña (No. 96, born Saint-Denis, 1915), Emmanuel Raymond Scopelitis (No. 96, born Saint-Denis, 1918), Martin González (No. 96, born Saint-Denis, 1917), Julian Iglesias (No. 96 in the early 1920s, born Matapozuelos, 1919), Lucienne Duclermortier (No. 98, born in 1918 at No. 100 to war refugee parents from the Nord), Joséfa Rabanedo (at No. 100

schooling by their families which, interestingly, could be the same who had sent their children to work in the factories at a young age.¹³⁹ Hostilities at school could at times have ethnic overtones, but foreigners were no more targeted than those newly arrived from a distant area or another city. Soon enough, long-lasting friendship would push these initial frictions to the background.¹⁴⁰ We know from scattered evidence that Spanish children, in particular, would help their parents with paperwork and, at times, serve as interpreters with the authorities.¹⁴¹

Over time, several children from the cités were distinguished for their academic performance, including in working-class families of Spanish, Belgian, or Italian origin.¹⁴² Three of the prizes in English awarded in 1926 by the *Association*

until the late 1920s, born Saint-Denis, 1917), Maria and Antonia Velasco (No. 100, born Paris, 1918, and Saint-Denis, 1919). See *JSD*, 14.07.1928; 28.06.1930; 11.07.1931.

¹³⁹ In 1889, Joseph Winckler, a young Lorrainer from a glassworkers' family living at No. 98, was among the first residents that we can identify with certainty as graduates. This did not prevent him from working at Legras in his early teens, but by the time he had turned 20, he had secured a job as an employee (*JSD*, 25.07.1889; SDMA, 1F19-1F21, 1891 and 1896 censuses, 98 Av. de Paris; SDMA, 1K1/42, Electoral register, 1898, Winckler Joseph Charles; AD Meurthe-et-Moselle, 2 Mi-EC 147/R1, Croismare, 1876, births, No.11; SDMA, E326, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1903, No. 436). In 1911, Michel Pirolli, the younger brother of Luigi referred to in chapter 2, obtained his *certificat d'études*; this bears witness to a conscious decision by Giacinto and Maria Carmina Pirolli to push Michel (and also his brother Mariano) towards more rewarding careers. As it turned out, Michel Pirolli ended up a successful businessman in South America (see *JSD*, 2.07.1911; AD93, 1E66/321, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1910, Vol. 2, No. 377, 25.06.1910; FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30; Int. Par.; APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1310, 23-26.11.1907). Other graduates in the 1910s included Joseph Della Valle, who had been born at No. 100 in a family from Arpino (*JSD*, 26.06.1913; SDMA, E313, Saint-Denis, births, 1901, vol. 1, No. 79) and Antoine Pirolli, the son of Bonaventura and Domenica Pirolli, from Casalcassinese, born and raised at No. 100 (*JSD*, 27.06.1915). In 1922, both Salvador Peña and Félix Gabriele graduated: their families, respectively from the provinces of Burgos and Caserta, were neighbours at No. 96 (*JSD*, 15.07.1922).

¹⁴⁰ Ralph Schor, "Les Italiens dans les villes françaises, 1919-1939," in Denis Menjot, Jean-Luc Pinol (eds.), *Les Immigrants et la ville. Insertion, intégration, discrimination (XII^e-XX^e siècles)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1996, 114.

¹⁴¹ Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge' ...," *op. cit.*, 713-4. See the example of a 15-year-old Spanish girl serving as interpreter at the police station: APP, CB 92.13, 1917/89, 15.01.1917.

¹⁴² Among them were Isidora Agraz, a 11-year-old born in Santurce, and living at No. 96. Other award-winning classmates included Blanche Piers and Lucie Carbone, both from No. 100, and Andrée Rose Affairoux and Fernande Jacovissi, and, from No. 100 and 102 respectively. In both cases, the girls from Italian families were one year older than their neighbours, which could attest that they had mastered French at a slightly later stage. But the sharing out of awards across origins and social backgrounds is striking. In 1924, Fernande's elder sister Louise Jacovissi, trained as a seamstress, received the first prize in history and geography from the Association philotechnique, which provided additional courses and professional training to those who had finished school. This did not prevent Louise to get married, at age 16, to an Italian-born neighbour of hers a few months after receiving her

philotechnique, a secular charity providing additional courses and professional training to those who had completed their primary education, went to three residents of No. 96: Yvonne, a refugee from the First World War and the daughter of a Belgian-born single mother; and Pascal and Salvador, the sons of two long-time glassworkers respectively from Arpino and the Montaña de Burgos.¹⁴³ The last two, of the same age, were probably friends. Salvador, born to labourers in rural Spain in a family of seven, became an office clerk before he turned 20, one of the earliest examples of upward mobility among Spanish families in the tenement.¹⁴⁴ Pascal, for his part, went from glassworker to storehouse manager.¹⁴⁵ But the word about those English classes may have been passed by Yvonne, who was already in contact with Spanish residents: her younger sister had married a Spaniard from the province of Murcia.¹⁴⁶

Generational changes

Understandably, the growing diversity in residents' networks appears correlated to both the time spent in the place of immigration, and the age at which people had arrived in the Plaine.¹⁴⁷ That much can be illustrated by a comparison between the network, in the 1890s and 1900s, of Victor Spreisser and that of his parents Raphaël and Catherine.

prize (*JSD*, 4.08.1923, 5.07.1924; AD93, 1E66/348, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1925, vol. 1, No. 211, 28.03.1925).

¹⁴³ *JSD*, 7.08.1926: Yvonne Durbecq, Salvador Peña, Pascal Gabriele. The motives for taking these English classes is unclear, but the mid-1920s were a time of soaring popularity for English classes (see Rebecca Rogers, "Les femmes dans l'enseignement des langues vivantes: éléments pour une histoire à construire," *Études de linguistique appliquée*, (2006), No. 2, 135–49).

¹⁴⁴ See MA Valle de Valdebezana, nascimientos, 1908, tomo 19, p. 183, Salvador Peña Peña; AD93, 1E66/403, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1928, vol. 2, No. 898, 6.08.1928; 1E66/404, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1929, Vol. 1, No. 289, 21.02.1929.

¹⁴⁵ AVP, D4R1 2535, Military registers, 1928, No. 5505, Pascal Henri Gabriele.

¹⁴⁶ AD93, 1E66/346, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1924, vol. 1, No. 62 and Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1924, No. 10, 2.02.1924.

¹⁴⁷ The most recent theories of intergenerational integration include an important dose of sociological contingency. See Hartmut Esser, "Does the 'New' Immigration Require a 'New' Theory of Intergenerational Integration?," *The International Migration Review*, Vol. 38 (2004), No. 3, 1126–59.

As opposed to other glassworkers from the East who had migrated slowly west, Raphaël and Catherine had only known their native region and Paris.¹⁴⁸ Both of them had a very strong accent and were probably not that fluent in French: in 1891, they were marked as foreigners in the census although they had already retrieved their original French nationality.¹⁴⁹ After the passing of Catherine, who was originally from Alsace, Raphaël, still residing at No. 96, remarried with a widow from Moselle. On that occasion, witnesses were all family members, and all from Alsace-Lorraine. A family with whom the Spreisser were close were the Bastians, from Alsace-Lorraine as well, who had also lived at No. 100 in the mid-1890s.¹⁵⁰ Aside from his late wife's family, members of which still lived at No. 100, Raphaël was also close to Joseph Gérard, a Lorrainer and first cousin of his mother, who had been dwelling at No. 96 since the 1880s. After this cousin died, his widow became the concierge at No. 96 and probably helped secure accommodation for Victor when he came back from military service.

Other elements point to the strong ties Raphaël kept with his native region. In 1888, he had turned to the *Société des Alsaciens-Lorrains* for help in translating and filing the documents required for his naturalisation request.¹⁵¹ As for his and Catherine's immediate neighbours listed on censuses from 1886 to 1901, all but one were from Alsace or Lorraine.¹⁵² Which is not to suggest that Raphaël always enjoyed excellent

¹⁴⁸ Born in Hartzviller, a glassworking town in Meurthe, Raphaël had first moved to the nearby town of Dabo, before the Franco-Prussian War. He and his family then came back to Hartzviller, before moving to France in 1878, where they lived in Pantin, the Plaine-Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers, Le Bourget, and the Plaine-Saint-Denis again (see FNA, BB/11/1728, 6337 x 83).

¹⁴⁹ SDMA, 1F19, 64 Av. de Paris.

¹⁵⁰ See SDMA, E281, Saint-Denis, marriages, 3.01.1894-31.12.1894, No. 163. Evidence of the connection is that two daughters of the Spreissers became godmothers of the Bastians' children. Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, baptisms, 1895, No. 37, 7.04.1895; 1897, No. 225, 24.11.1897.

¹⁵¹ See chapter 4.

¹⁵² FNA, BB/11/1728, 6337 x 83, Raphaël and Catherine Spreisser; SDMA, 1F17, 1886, Av. de Paris 87; on the Bonnins, SDMA, 1K1/32 and SDMA, E260, 1889, marriages, No. 291, 21.09.1889; on the Meyers, SDMA, 1K1/32; SDMA, 1F19, 1891 Av. de Paris 64); on the Baguets, AD88, 4E238/10-39780, Harsault, marriages, 26.02.1862, and the Lehnerts, MA Pantin, 63W14, 1886, marriages, No. 178, 4.02.1886; SDMA, 1F21, 1896, Av. de Paris 96; on the Lentzes, FNA, BB/11/2475, 9087 x 90; the Sommers, AD93, 1E66/134, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1884, vol. 1, No. 320, 27.09.1884; SDMA,

relations with his fellow Alsatians and Lorrainers. In December of 1884, at Legras, he had stood by the side of his eldest daughter as she had publicly accused an Alsatian woman from No. 100 of having libelled her by way of an anonymous letter.¹⁵³ The incident was settled in court and Raphaël was sentenced to a fine. But overall, there is little doubt that Raphaël and Catherine evolved in Alsatian and Lorrainer circles for almost their entire life.

By contrast, the world of Victor, who had arrived in the Paris area as a young child in the early 1880s, was wider. He seems to have built more diverse social networks than his parents. Before his marriage, he had joined the Navy in 1894, and had spent two years partaking in military operations in Tonkin.¹⁵⁴ His wife Rosalie had been born in central France. In 1901, the young couple's immediate neighbours were from Aisne and Belgium respectively.¹⁵⁵ An incident from April 1900 shows that Victor mingled with a variety of people on the streets: he was arrested for punching two women, one of whom was related to a notorious criminal.¹⁵⁶ Having moved to the La Chapelle area, in the same building as a brother-in-law and uncle of his wife Rosalie,¹⁵⁷ Victor left Legras and changed work many times, whereas his father spent his entire career in a handful of factories. In the Summer of 1902, Victor departed for Belgium, and from there to Mexico, only coming back at the end of the year. These travels, the range of which was likely expanded by Victor's military experience and diverse acquaintances, contrasted with the simpler migration routes that his parents had followed.¹⁵⁸

1F24, 1901, Av. de Paris 96: on the Schertzes, SDMA, E322, Civil registry, deaths, 1902, No. 528, 23.07.1902 (we skipped the shop of Laurent Sauvage, the shoemaker).

¹⁵³ AD93, 4U7/460, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, 16.01.1885, Offner vs. Sprisser (sic).

¹⁵⁴ AVP, D4R1 829, Military registers, 1895, No. 2028, Victor Spreisser.

¹⁵⁵ See SDMA, 1F24, Av. de Paris 64 [Victor is erroneously called "Nicolas"]; SDMA, 1F27; SDMA, E308, births, 1900, No. 616, Marie Rosalie Spreisser, 12.05.1900; on the Michets' (not "Michel"), see AD02, 5Mi0717, Oisy, 1865, No. 45, 6.09.1865.

¹⁵⁶ AVP, D1U6 716, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 22.05.1900, Victor Spreisser; *Le Petit Journal*, 25.03.1900, "L'Évasion de Dhulu."

¹⁵⁷ AVP, V4E 9075, Paris 10e, births, 1901, No. 4325, 27.09.1901, Henriette Georgette Spreisser.

¹⁵⁸ In February of 1903, Victor fell to his death from the fourth floor of his building, as he was trying to come back to his estranged wife's after yet another night of heavy drinking. *Le Petit Parisien*, 14.02.1903; 15.02.1903; 18.02.1903; 19.02.1903; 22.02.1903; 27.02.1903; 3.03.1903.

As important as generational changes may have been, no expansion and mobilisation of social networks would have been possible without particular characters who acted as intermediaries. Those were crucial to resolve conflicts and forge bonds of solidarities between individuals, or with institutions.

Go-betweenes

Operating at slightly different levels, the concierges, shopkeepers, and local politicians acted as the three main categories of intermediaries. Employed by the landlord, concierges were the natural point of contact between them and the tenants. Evidence suggests they were instrumental in obtaining clemency from the former on behalf of the latter. They also provided other sorts of services: keeping a vacant accommodation for one's relatives; certifying the good morality of residents' children when those were in danger of being put in jail; issuing precious certificates of residence, which were critical, in particular, in naturalisation requests.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ AD93, 4U7/723, 27.10.1916, Veuve Gréco c. Lutel; APP, CB 92.10, 1913/859, 11.09.1913; CB 92.21, 1925/170, 289 bis, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925; FNA, BB/11/2654, 3500 x 92, Georges Wymann.

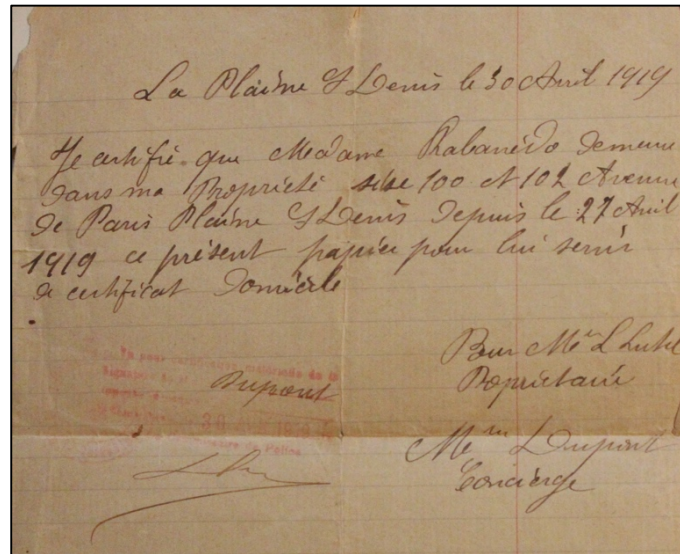


Figure 8: Certificate of residence written by Mme Dupont, concierge at No. 100, on behalf of the landlord Mr. Lutel, on request from Mme Rabanedo, 30.04.1919

The hotel and bar owners were no less influential in promoting people's interactions. The Poullains at No. 102, for instance, would let Casertani residents dance to the music of their own region: the bar was critical in making the newcomers feel welcome in the cités.¹⁶⁰ They also let their restaurant's backroom be used as a venue for multiple meetings of the Plaine socialists—at a time of scarcity of meeting places—and to a lesser extent, local unions.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, like most of their

¹⁶⁰ JSD, 14.08.1902.

¹⁶¹ Poullain's bar hosted a number of union and political meetings, especially between 1901 and 1905. See Syndicat de la verrerie (SDMA, CT424, 18.08.1901); Groupe humanitaire de Saint-Denis – quartier de la Plaine (*L'Aurore*, 12.07.1902); Réveil socialiste révolutionnaire de la Plaine-Saint-Denis, the first Saturday every month from late 1901 (*La Petite République socialiste*, 24.10.1901, 3.11.1901, 07.02.1902, 2.03.1902, 11.06.1902, 07.09.1902, 5.10.1902, 16.11.1902; *L'Aurore*, 23.10.1901, 6.02.1902, 6.12.1902, 21.12.1902, 22.05.1905; *La Lanterne*, 7.5.1905); Syndicat des garçons de magasin et cochers-livreurs (*L'Aurore*, 3.07.1904; SDMA, CT424, 3.07.1904); Comité intersyndical du bâtiment (*Le Petit Parisien*, 7.12.1912). The halt around 1905 most probably echoed the disappearing of old committees as the SFIO was being put in place (see on this point Nathalie Graveleau, "Les Cafés comme lieux de sociabilité politique à Paris et en banlieue, 1905-1913," *Cahiers du Centre Fédéral*, Vol. 1, No. 3, Sept. 1992, 18–9). See also Suzanna Barrows, "Parliaments of the People': The Political Culture of Cafés in the Early Third Republic," in *Id.*, Robin Room (eds.), *Drinking: Behavior and Belief in Modern History*, Berkeley, Los Angeles (CA): University of California Press, 1991, 87–97.

peers, they would kick out people from the bar, whenever their conduct was deemed excessive or disturbing.¹⁶² Having a falling out with them was to risk losing credit, both at the bar and at the charcuterie of M. Delamotte, a cousin of the Poullains'.¹⁶³ Evidence from other hotels in the area show that tenants were frequently scared of being evicted by the hotel owners. At No. 102, however, lawsuits lodged to that end were extremely rare.¹⁶⁴

The sources do not record whether owners of bars at No. 102 and 96 ever performed the function that was reported for some of their Breton colleagues, namely acting as a sort of ethnic counsellor resolving disputes within a group of people sharing the same origin.¹⁶⁵ What does survive, by contrast, are traces of poor residents successfully going through the bar owners, who were also current or former members of the city council, to refer their benefit requests to the municipal authorities.¹⁶⁶ Two members of the city council would live in the tenement block, successively running the same shop at No. 98 –a grocery turned into a bar– from 1904 to 1919. A third one, M. Lutel, himself a former bar owner, was the landlord at No. 100-102 after 1907.¹⁶⁷ The

¹⁶² AD93, 4U7/916, Brigade de gendarmerie de Saint-Denis Plaine, procès-verbal c. Henri Dannay, 30.10.1891.

¹⁶³ Georges Valentin Delamotte was the cousin once removed of Louis Bénard, who had married Poullain's daughter in 1894 and run the bar until 1900.

¹⁶⁴ See APP, CB 92.12, 1915/1011, 27.12.1915. We found only five rent-related lawsuits by the owners of the hotel at No. 102 over 50 years. Here are the references: AD93, 4U7/469, 12.04.1889, Poullain c. Landry; 4U7/516, 17.05.1895, Bénard c. Le Tessier; 4U7/604, 19.09.1902, Veuve Poullain c. Pinson; 4U7/651, 14.09.1906, Poullain c. Louvet; 4U7/781, 14.03.1930, Mandagot c. Lafont.

¹⁶⁵ JSD, 17.11.1889.

¹⁶⁶ SDMA, CT806, Letter from Mme Veuve Baulay, 100 av. de Paris, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.10.1890, with handwritten note from Mr. Ragey, city council member and owner of the bar at 92 av. de Paris.

¹⁶⁷ On Louis Gustave Gambon, see Jean-Paul Brunet, "Une banlieue ouvrière...", *op. cit.*, 922; *Bulletin des convocations et ordres du jour des LL*** de la région parisienne de la Fédération du Grand-Orient de France*, 15.03.1908, 10; on Eugène Péchié, chapter 1, note 290; SDMA, CT833, "Demandes d'inscription au bénéfice du legs Fontaine, 1912-1918," Letter from André Bayer to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 12.06.1912; on Joachim Louis Lutel, SDMA, CT94, Petition from the Plaine residents to the Préfet de Police, handed to the Mayor of Saint-Denis on 13.02.1894; *Le Rappel*, 25.10.1910; Int. Lutel, No. 24, 15.02.2017; chapter 1, p. 99). There would be yet another councillor at No. 98 after the Second World War (see SDMA, 2 AC W 9, 96 av. Wilson, Letter from M. Fauvel to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 17.03.1952).

councillors were in charge, in particular, of inquiring over the economic situation of families requiring help from the *Bureau de bienfaisance**.

Their pivotal role for residents can be illustrated by the example of yet another character, M. Bricongne, who lived a few yards north from the cités. A former railway engineer and accountant, elected to the city council from 1904 to 1912 on a radical, yet anti-revolutionary platform along with Lutel, Bricongne was not only a member of the committee allocating benefits, but also the one who physically handed out, every Wednesday, bread and meat allowances.¹⁶⁸ His help could go a long way, as he was also the president of the neighbourhood's main private benefit society. In addition, he ran the musical society at Legras, which may have prompted some to join out of self-interest.¹⁶⁹ When in 1906, a wine wholesaler at 96 av. de Paris gave him 10 francs for the poor, that was certainly a way of currying favour with the councillor.¹⁷⁰

Other shopkeepers did not need to be local politicians for people to become friendly with them. Like many others, the long-time owner of the charcuterie at No. 98 was certainly very appreciated through the credit he extended to his clients. The level of trust could be high enough for them to even cover part of the residents' debts towards other shopkeepers or the landlord.¹⁷¹ Only when the debt became too high or when the

¹⁶⁸ AVP, D4R1 566, 1889, No. 3332, Eugène Henri Bricongne; *Le Réveil de Saint-Denis*, 14.05.1904; SDMA, CT151, Commissions des soutiens de famille, pensions et secours, 7.02.1901; SDMA, 1Q5, 29.12.1908.

¹⁶⁹ SDMA, CT405, "Demandes d'autorisation de réunions," 1902, Letter from M. Bricongne, for L'Harmonie de la Plaine, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 12.12.1902; SDMA, 20C 001-001, *Annuaire Bijou* (no date, between 1919 and 1925), 11; SDMA, CT533, "Répertoire des associations dionysiennes," no date [after 1911];

¹⁷⁰ SDMA, 1Q4, Bureau de bienfaisance. Délibérations de la commission, juin 1902-novembre 1906, séance du 29.10.1906.

¹⁷¹ AD93, 4U7/477, 10.07.1891, Grandgérard c. Lenglet; AD93, 4U7/479, 29.01.1892, Boucher c. Lizant.

debtors left the area did Delamotte seek justice.¹⁷² In those cases, trust could quickly give way to suspicion and bitterness.¹⁷³

In conclusion, positive interactions between inhabitants of the cités and others or between each other could take multiple forms. Beyond the particular cases of family members, spouses and close friends, these contacts produced and readjusted people's solidarity networks. These networks depended to a larger extent upon circumstances and common activities, than on origin or ethnicity.

3.2. Confrontation

Relationships between residents were not always favourable. Social scientists have shown that diversity could be problematic for interpersonal trust.¹⁷⁴ Perhaps the reasons for the residents' antagonisms had more to do with origin than their affinities.

3.2.1. Daily violence

Antagonisms despite a common origin

The first answer to that hypothesis is that a common origin was far from preventing conflicts, and sometimes could be one of the root causes for it. Rivalries and strife often pitted "compatriots" against each other. This could be because some stole money, like those two men at No. 96 who robbed their hosts and fellow boarders of 500 fr. in 1913, or that other lodger who stole a couple of shirts, a pull-over and a suit

¹⁷² The AD93 4U7 series (*Justice de paix*, civil rulings) record 15 decisions on complaints lodged by M. Delamotte against his debtors between 1893 and 1904.

¹⁷³ See Alain Faure, "Aspects de la vie du quartier dans le Paris populaire de la fin du XIX^e siècle," *art. cit.*, 291.

¹⁷⁴ Dietlind Stolle, Stuart Soroka, Richard Johnston, "When does diversity erode trust? Neighborhood diversity, interpersonal trust and the mediating effect of social interactions," *Political Studies*, Vol. 56 (2008), No. 1, 57–75.

before disappearing.¹⁷⁵ It was not uncommon for lodgers to leave without paying in full what they owed. A plumber from Pontecorvo who had stayed three and a half years at his cousin's at No. 100, was eventually sued by his cousin's widow over an outstanding debt, and acrimony ran high between them.¹⁷⁶ As Alain Faure and Claire Lévy-Vroelant have described, the *garnis** were often a cynical business, and even among relatives, generosity and mutual support were probably not the main driving force.¹⁷⁷

Mutual appreciation fostered by proximity could also have its downsides and lead to conflicts. Whether a Spanish lodger at No. 100 actually had an affair with his host's wife or not –which she denied, but he eventually confessed to–, is unclear. But the woman's husband and son, who caught the lodger in her bed one night, certainly believed it to be the case. Not only did they kick him out of their apartment, but a few days later, they ambushed and murdered him over it. All four were from the Cáceres province, as was the other lodger who shared the kitchen with the victim.¹⁷⁸

The numerical importance of those conflicts is certainly the consequence, at least in part, of the overall weight of family and micro-regional regional ties in people's social networks. The more interaction people have with each other, the more likely they are to engage in conflictual exchanges. And yet the frequency of feuds or divisions among people of the same origin is important for putting in perspective the few antagonisms that may have had an inter-origin, and perhaps interethnic, component. Those appeared to have been much less ordinary, and much less relevant on a day-to-day basis.

¹⁷⁵ APP, CB 92.10, 1913/817, 25.08.1913; APP, CB 92.20, 1924/544, 27.04.1924.

¹⁷⁶ APP, CB 92.5, 1909/917, 10.10.1909; AD93, 4U7/697, 26.04.1912, Veuve Carboni c. Caramandré (sic).

¹⁷⁷ Alain Faure, Claire Lévy-Vroelant, *op. cit.*, 394, note 96.

¹⁷⁸ APP, CB 92.21, 1925/717, 16.05.1925; CB 92.21, 1925/746, 2.06.1925; CB 92.22, 1925/1205, 24.08.1925; AVP, D1U8 167, Cour d'assises de la Seine, 17.11.1926, Matéos Santiago.

Violence between family members was a recurrent feature, and the most extreme episodes made their way to the sources at our disposal: a son injuring his father at M. Poullain's hotel with a knife and brass knuckles; a worker at No. 96 kicking and punching his drunken wife to death; a heavily drinking mother at the same address who would deprive her four-year-old boy of food and lock him out of the apartment if he dared complain.¹⁷⁹ Similar dramas recurred until the very end of our period. A former child glassworker at Legras who had spent two years at No. 100 around 1910, ended up stabbing his wife to death in the 1930s.¹⁸⁰

Family conflicts over money could be just as bitter and fought in the courtroom. A widow at No. 96 who was unable to find work to support herself financially, sued her children for alimony for years. One of her sons was even sued by his mother-in-law as well for that same reason.¹⁸¹ Other, more complicated motives could also fracture families. In a family from Pozzilli who had lived at No. 96 around 1911, the elder sister left for America in 1921, where she married after a few years. As her husband and she were unable to have children, she wrote to her brother who was still living at No. 100 in the 1930s, to ask him if he would agree to let her adopt one of his own children. Upon his refusal, they fell out with each other and never talked again.¹⁸²

Apart from lodgers and relatives, conflicts between members of the same origin-based networks have also left multiple traces in the sources. In the context of child

¹⁷⁹ APP, CB 92.9, 1913/323, 5.04.1913; APP, CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918; APP, CB 92.21, 1925/170, 289 bis, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925.

¹⁸⁰ APP, CB 92.30, 1934/1444, 1447, 11.08.1934; AVP, D2U8 390, Dossier d'assises, Lopez Rufo, arrêt du 4.01.1935.

¹⁸¹ AD93, 4U7/458, 2.05.1884, Hepply c. Hepply; 4U7/463, 5.11.1886, Hepply c. Hepply; AD93, 4U7/469, 18.01.1889, Veuve Hepply c. Hippolyte Hepply, Léon Hepply, François Hepply, Marianne Hepply; AD93, 4U7/642, 3.11.1905, veuve Berton c. Hepply. Three other residents at the same address sued their children into providing for them, and a patron of the hotel at No. 102 was forced to support his mother: see AD93, 4U7/471, 27.09.1889, Sainty c. Sainty; AD93, 4U7/564, 12.05.1899, Laigle c. Laigle; AD93, 4U7/671, 11.12.1908, Veuve Selle c. enfants Selle; AD93, 4U7/599, 18.04.1902, Veuve Sallot c. Sallot.

¹⁸² Int. Bouchard (No. 16), 17.04.2016; FNA, BB/11/13065, 12210 x 30, Benedetto Pirolli; APP, IA 164, No. 19780, Pirolli Benedetto; FNA, BB/11/11367, 82663 x 28, Jérôme Pirolli.

trafficking, for instance, open rivalries could pit fellow Casertani against each other. In 1901, Pasquale Greco was stabbed by one of his neighbours at No. 100, after blaming him for seizing child workers originally under his authority. Both men probably very familiar with each other, as they came from the same fraction of Roccadarce, in Italy, and had long-standing kinship ties.¹⁸³ Failure to abide by the terms of the contract of child-leasing was another motive of disputes between residents of the same origin.¹⁸⁴ In 1907, a former resident denounced a fellow Casertan to the French police as the author of a murder, which the victim himself, before dying, had refused to do.¹⁸⁵ Friction between Spanish residents was not uncommon either, and some had arrived in the cités with previous experience of feuds among Spaniards of different regional origins.¹⁸⁶

As in the case of positive interactions, ethnicity could alternatively be combined, or overshadowed, by other grounds for difference conditioning, and proceeding from, conflictual interactions. Sharing the same space may have caused, for instance, occasional quarrels between neighbours, but little is to be found in the sources to that effect. For one thing, given the numbers of people cramming the tenement and the high turnover rate, residents would not necessarily have known all of their neighbours. One day, a woman at No. 96 declared she had seen a “man she does not know” punch one of her neighbours; both were living at No. 96, but she was only familiar with the latter.¹⁸⁷ On another occasion, a long-time resident from No. 96 failed to recognise

¹⁸³ *Le Matin*, 29.09.1900; *Le Rappel*, 30.09.1900; ASC Rocca d’Arce, civil registers, births, 26.08.1847, Pasquale Greco; Registro della popolazione, Via Fraioli 105 (Bernardo Fraioli), 162.

¹⁸⁴ See chapter 2, note 266. On these men’s common origin (Arpino), see, for Ranaldi, AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, *doc. cit.*; and for Di Benedetto, FNA, BB/11/11506, 89650 x 28.

¹⁸⁵ ACS, *Min. interno, Dir. gen. p. s., Div. polizia, Div. polizia giudiziaria*, 1907-1909, b. 177, fasc. 13016, “Caserta. Reati. Avvenimenti. Ecc,” 1904-1909, Murder of Vincenzo d’Olerio, in Paris, 25.03.1907.

¹⁸⁶ APP, CB 92.16, 1919/305, 7.04.1919; APP, CB 92.20, 1924/713, 27.05.1924. Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018. Before arriving in the cités, Estanislao González had worked in iron mines in northern Spain, and remembered brawls between teams along regional lines, fuelled by resentment against internal migrants who accepted lower wages or would not join strikes.

¹⁸⁷ APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1042, 8.09.1907.

anyone in a group of people involved in a brawl by the main door, although two of them had been living at the same address for at least seven years.¹⁸⁸ When he gave his account of the murder committed on the Spanish lodger by his hosts in 1925, another resident referred to “*deux Espagnols que je connais de vue seulement, le père et le fils qui habitent le même immeuble que moi.*”¹⁸⁹

But the fact that neighbours did not know each other well would not prevent them from being on bad terms with each other. In early 1907, a cart-driver from No. 96, originally from Paris, who had arrived to the cités only a few weeks earlier, refused to allow his wife to spend time with one of her neighbours, from Meurthe-et-Moselle. In that situation, ethnicity does not seem to have played any major part. The root cause of the animus remains unknown, but what conditioned the agents’ reactions had much more to do with gender than ethnicity, if only through the order given by the cart-driver to his wife, and also the reaction of the snubbed neighbour’s son, who fired gunshots at the cart-driver by the main door of No. 96.¹⁹⁰ Identifications based on geographic origin did not play a prominent part in these antipathies.

Calumny and baseless accusations, though infrequent, could at times have something to do with origin. When Italian-born children falsely accused the grocers’ son at No. 100, of kicking them in 1913, it is possible that some degree of ethnic resentment, along with class-based envy, was involved.¹⁹¹ The only similar episode we know of occurred decades later, and was much more serious: a young female resident at No. 100 would falsely accuse a Portuguese migrant of rape.¹⁹² But those incidents remained extremely rare, and the most ordinary invectives occurred between people from the same region, often leading to brawls between neighbours. In 1912, by the

¹⁸⁸ APP, CB 92.11, 1915/284, 17.04.1915-9.05.1915.

¹⁸⁹ APP, CB 92.21, 1925/746, 2.06.1925 (“Two Spaniards I only know by sight, a father and his son who live in the same building as I.”)

¹⁹⁰ APP, CB 92.3, 1907/419, 31.03.1907; AD54, 5 Mi 427/R 4, Pierrepont, marriages, 19.04.1879.

¹⁹¹ APP, CB 92.10, 1913/1014, 8.11.1913.

¹⁹² APP, CB 91.50, 1939/1552, 22.11.1939.

main door of No. 96, Rosa Tarsia got into a violent argument with an Italian neighbour of hers. Rosa had called this neighbour's mother-in-law, a long-time *padrona* at No. 100, a "slave trader."¹⁹³ A few days later, two sisters who had grown up in the tenement and now lived around the corner, had a heated exchange themselves after one blamed the other for defrauding her landlord and having let her children become "*voleurs*" and "*apaches**."¹⁹⁴ And on another occasion, a woman from Aube living at No. 100, profusely insulted one of her neighbours, from Vosges, alleging that her husband was stealing coal and potatoes from the railway Company he worked for.¹⁹⁵ To get on each other's nerves, ethnic prejudices were far from a pre-requisite.

Sources do not document a great many episodes of violence between people from different origins. Exhaustively sifting through five decades of law enforcement records,¹⁹⁶ we were able to identify 48 episodes in which residents were involved in a violent action –mostly physical, but at times only verbal– with someone other than members of their family. For 62 of the pairs of antagonists that emerge from these incidents, we were able to reconstruct their respective origins. Reverting to the geographic categories that we have used earlier, we find that in the 12 violent episodes in which residents from Caserta were involved, more than three quarters of their adversaries did not come from the same region. Residents born in Spain took part in seven more or less serious skirmishes; 4 out of 7 of their opponents in these events

¹⁹³ AD93, 4U7/697, 1912 (2), 15.03.1912, 22.03.1912, Époux Tarsia c. époux Caruso ("Carouso"). The record bears the word "*négresse*," but given the reputation of Elisabetta Tarsia née Venditelli, it is probable that the word used in Italian was "*negriera*." See chapter 2, note 279. Note that Luigi Einaudi used the same word to denounce the *padroni* (see *La Stampa*, 26.05.1901, *art. cit.*)

¹⁹⁴ AD93, 4U7/697, 12.04.1912, Époux Gallet c. époux Rouziers.

¹⁹⁵ AD93, 4U7/533, 14.10.1896, Dion c. époux Robert.

¹⁹⁶ See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends," tab "Adversaries (press + LE)." Police registers for the Plaine station (APP, CB.92 series) are missing before 1905, but written reports by police and gendarmerie officers which led to proceedings before the local police court for earlier years are kept in AD93, 4U7/902-1077 with interruptions for the years 1886-1890, 1911-1919 and 1923-1937. Records of civil rulings before the juge de paix are continuous between 1880 and 1946 (AD93, 4U7/450-826). All those sources have been examined for the years 1882-1931. Criminal cases brought before the Seine district courts (*chambres correctionnelles du tribunal de première instance, cour d'appel, cour d'assises*), whose rulings are stored without interruption throughout the period (AVP, D1U6, D3U9, and D1U8 series), have only been examined when referenced in other sources (military registers, police registers and newspaper accounts).

were not from Spain themselves. As for Alsatian and Lorrainers, 1 out of 4 of their adversaries came from a different area.

Numbers alone do not reveal whether origin was a factor in the incidents or not. Once we analyse qualitatively the content of surviving accounts in the sources, we can state that origin might have played a part in, at most, about a third of the violent, outside-of-family episodes. In those instances, the residents and their opponents came from significantly different areas, with distinct linguistic traits. However, actual evidence of ethnically framed identifications is very slim. The quasi-absence of racial or ethnic slurs, in particular, stands out. Only in two cases was an insult of that sort uttered by one of the antagonists. Having read thousands of analytical accounts of similar altercations in the area, we can be confident that this silence is not due to any pattern of sugar-coating on the part of the local police or gendarmerie officers. Throughout the period, they showed no reluctance in transcribing almost word for word what was reported by the people they interrogated –frequently using quotation marks and occasionally adding “*sic*” markers to underline slang or vulgar language.¹⁹⁷ Only rarely, mostly in judicial rulings, were insults or curse words redacted for decency, not necessarily to the point of impeding their intelligibility.¹⁹⁸ In fact, serial and quantitative micro-analysis seem rather inadequate to reconstruct the motives of seemingly interethnic confrontations in any convincing way. For this, we need to probe beneath the surface, and engage in a close critical analysis of the sources themselves.

¹⁹⁷ For an example of verbatim profanities followed by “*sic*,” see APP, CB 92.7, 1911/1085, 8.11.1911; for another case of extremely vulgar language between quotation marks, APP, CB 92.21, 1925/705, 19.05.1925.

¹⁹⁸ AD93, 4U7/455, 11.08.1882, Prime c. Renard (“*l’a traité de V... et de P...*”); AD93, 4U7/457, 7.09.1883, Pfister c. Greiner (“*l’injure le traitant de M... de la cité de l’Est*”); AD93, 4U7/979, Brigade de gendarmerie de Saint-Denis Plaine, procès-verbal c. Léonard Poulain, 25.09.1899 (“*il m’a traité de c... et d’imbécile*”); AD93, 4U7/690, 12.05.1911, Wagner c. Tarsia (“*m...*”).

3.2.2. A multifaceted clash

In order to assess, as precisely as possible, the relative importance that origin may have had among the multiple factors fuelling violence, let us dive into one particularly resounding episode, belonging to the minority of instances in which people from different ethnicities were pitted against each other.

Given the scarcity of first-hand police reports of the incident, it is essentially through newspaper sources that the facts are known.¹⁹⁹ Despite the usual mistakes and contradictions in the press, we can hold a number of factual elements as credible. The action started on a Sunday night, on August 19, 1900. The Avenue de Paris was crowded with people enjoying the annual Fête de la Plaine, a well-attended and colourful string of food and entertainment stands.²⁰⁰ Children had been playing a variety of games in the afternoon: sack races and the greasy pole were among the most popular.²⁰¹ Well into the evening, people continued to enjoy music, food, and some of the attractions. At around 9 p.m., a group of young glassworkers, who had just enjoyed a few rides on a merry-go-round, went for drinks at the *débit** at No. 92 Av. de Paris. Their names were René Abrioux,²⁰² Louis Wagner, the brothers Jules and Camille Derosier, and the Derosiers' brother-in-law, Charles Houvion.

¹⁹⁹ See *Le Journal*, 21.08.1900; *Le Matin*, 21.08.1900; *Le Petit Parisien*, 21.08.1900; *Le Moniteur universel*, 21.08.1900; *Le Radical*, 22.08.1900; *Le Temps*, 22.08.1900; *Le Petit Parisien*, 22.08.1900; *Le Rappel*, 22.08.1900; *La Petite République socialiste*, 22.08.1900; *La Lanterne*, 22.08.1900; *La Justice*, 23.08.1900; *JSD*, 23.08.1900; *L'Intransigeant*, 24.08.1900; *La Lanterne*, 28.08.1900. Apart from a telegram sent on 20.08.1900 the Police chief of the Saint-Denis South Station to the Préfet de police and the Procureur de la République (APP, BA914, No. 116362), the only official source to have survived is the ruling against Reale, Wagner, and Tari, sentencing the first two to six months in jail and a heavy fine, and acquitting the third (AVP, D1U6 727, 20.09.1900, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, Procureur de la République c. Real, Vagner, Tari). Wagner appealed and had his sentence commuted to a suspended jail time (AVP, D3U9 179, 10.11.1900, Cour d'appel de la Seine, Louis Vagner c. Procureur de la République).

²⁰⁰ See chapter 1, note 76.

²⁰¹ SDMA, 11227; Archives Tissot, 21 S 055 001, "Mémoires d'écolier," feuillet 5, p. 4.

²⁰² Abrioux is alternatively called Charles, Auguste and Jules in the newspaper accounts. His first name was probably René.



Figure 9: The débit* at 92 Av. de Paris (after 1907)

As they were coming in, they bumped into Pasquale Reale, a resident at No. 100. Born in Arpino in 1877, he had arrived in the Plaine in 1897 or 1898, along with his mother and brothers. In 1899, they had been joined by Pasquale's 12-year-old cousin Umberto –whom we met earlier in this chapter, and whose own parents would later arrive from Italy as well and remain at No. 100 for decades.²⁰³ That Sunday night, in the bar, Reale asked Camille Derosier to pay for a drink. Upon his refusal, Pasquale turned to Camille's brother. Same result; Jules replied that he was broke. Upon which Pasquale is alleged to have said: "*Ah! Tu n'as pas le sou. Eh bien, nous allons voir!*"²⁰⁴ and tried to search Jules Derosier's pockets, resulting in Jules throwing a first punch. Promptly retreating to No. 100, Pasquale came back minutes later with a knife, a gun, and a few friends, apparently all Italian.

In the fight that ensued, Reale stabbed Jules Derosier, and then Camille, who had tried to help his brother. As Jules' friends started to run after Reale to avenge the wounded brothers, a friend of Reale, called Raffaele Tari, fired gunshots at them, injuring Abrioux in the leg. Reale also fired his weapon, injuring Charles Houvion,

²⁰³ ASC Arpino, Stato Civile, nascita, 1877, No. 138, 2.04.1877, Reale Pasquale Daniele; SDMA, 1F24, 1901 Census, 100 Av. de Paris.

²⁰⁴ "Ah! Is that so? We'll see."

whom he then further wounded with knife blows to the thigh. Once again, Reale is said to have come back with more Italians from No. 100, and a “terrible,” second fight occurred. Dozens of gunshots were heard, and a newspaper set the number of injured at 22, including bystanders –a gross overestimation.²⁰⁵ Pasquale, eventually wounded to the neck (or the shoulder) by a gunshot fired by Wagner, was brought to the hospital, as were Houvion, Abrioux and Jules Derosier. The injuries were not that serious, and Reale, Tari and Wagner soon left the hospital and went to jail. In the following days, however, tensions still ran high at Legras; at least, that is what the factory’s management thought. It asked the police to keep the factory under surveillance.²⁰⁶

Even by the Plaine standards, the violence was quite extraordinary. What exactly had happened? According to most of the press accounts, it was abundantly clear that this was just another example of a broader pattern of antagonism between French and Italian workers. The words “French” and “Italian” appeared in almost all bold-typed titles about the event. Political leanings affected each newspaper’s interpretation of the international conflict, but that it was international was not in doubt. The moderate *Le Journal* connected the fight to other “atrocious scenes” of violence that had occurred in the northern suburbs, but did not elaborate further.²⁰⁷ Gérault-Richard, a former socialist member of parliament and chief editor of *La Petite République*, where he published alongside Jean Jaurès, took a broader view still, linking the scuffle to a similar episode in Saint-Étienne: this sort of clash had social causes, he claimed, and the only adequate answer was to promote class solidarity. “*Rien de plus triste... que cette guerre fratricide entre travailleurs également malheureux, également inconscients.*” That the arrival of workers who are paid lower wages than the French

²⁰⁵ *Le Radical*, 22.08.1900. Among the injured, a woman selling chips, who was supposedly hit by a bullet in her right arm; another man, a concierge from a nearby building who was walking home, was hurt by Reale’s knife. In reality, both sustained only superficial injuries, as did Reale, Houvion and Jules Desrosiers (AVP, D1U6 727, 20.09.1900, *doc. cit.*).

²⁰⁶ *La Justice*, 23.08.1900.

²⁰⁷ See *Le Journal*, 21.08.1900. That newspaper had not the most accurate information. It referred to the fête du Landy, claimed that Italian families had been living in the Plaine since the Franco-Prussian war, and indicated that Reale lived in the “passage” Saint-Nicolas (probably making a confusion with a place in the La Chapelle area).

would foster tensions is understandable, he wrote. But instead of fighting each other, they should unionise and close ranks against the factory owner, who can only welcome such bloody events between French and foreign workers.²⁰⁸

Others wasted no time to unearth local tensions they had barely any means to know about. According to the radical republican outlets *La Justice* and *Le Rappel*, the backdrop of the event was the high “*animosité*” between French and Italian glassworkers at Legras. The second even claimed that the Italian workers, “*armés jusqu’aux dents*,”²⁰⁹ had started to wander around over the past few days with the obvious intention to stir up conflict. Racism was reported as a potential factor by *La Justice*, which wrote that French workers accused Italians of being “*humbles, cauteleux, hypocrites*,”²¹⁰ and accept lower wages from the bosses so that they could eventually replace them. Conservative papers went further even, by not distancing themselves from that reasoning, and fully embracing the racist rhetoric as their own. For *Le Moniteur universel*, which inflated the number of combatants to over a hundred, Italians who had taken part in the free-for-all were “*naturellement*” armed with their knives. Motives of resentment between the two communities were many, it wrote, the main one being that “*tous les Italiens*” were “*plus ou moins révolutionnaires*,” and would never hesitate to work for low wages. Never mind the absence of logical link between the two arguments; those were two commonplaces of the anti-Italian rhetoric in the 1890s. The conservative local paper, the *Journal de Saint-Denis*, had by far the harshest words, noting that the Derosiers’ hatred for the Italian race is a very common one, since that race is “*la plus fourbe qu’il soit au monde*.”²¹¹ In that particular instance, the paper went on, the French had guns, and the “*Macaronis*,” their “*surin*

²⁰⁸ *La Petite République socialiste*, 24.08.1900. (“Nothing more saddening than this fratricide war between equally destitute, equally unconscious workers.”)

²⁰⁹ “Armed to the teeth.”

²¹⁰ “Humble, cunning, hypocritical.”

²¹¹ “The most treacherous in the world.”

national.”²¹² Was one passer-by stabbed in the back?²¹³ Then his assailant had to be Italian, the local paper concluded cynically.

The problem was that from the outset, important aspects of the story, probably leaked by the police, were deliberately left aside by newspapers because it did not fit their narrative, which was meant to warrant large-scale, predetermined conclusions. Only the *Petit Parisien* and the *Journal de Saint-Denis* cared to mention, in passing, a personal grudge between the Derosiers and some of their Italian colleagues at Legras. In fact, the core of the matter only emerged a few days later, and was granted a very limited space in the papers who bothered to follow up. Five days after the fight, the preliminary findings of the investigating judge were reported: the whole drama was not due to a mutual hatred between French and Italian workers, but to the entrenched rancour between two families, the Derosiers and the Taris, “stemming from the rivalry of two young men in love with the same woman.”²¹⁴ The *XIX^e siècle* pointed out that if it were true that the conflict was not related to nationality, its significance would lose much of its seriousness, and further clashes would not have to be feared between French and Italians.

Let’s acknowledge right away that the story of Franco-Italian tensions over wages was far from implausible. Beyond the infamous Aigues-Mortes massacre of 1893,²¹⁵ incidents of smaller magnitude between Frenchmen and Italians had been quite widespread in the 1890s.²¹⁶ But even distinguished scholars have indulged in views that overplay the inter-ethnic conflict, inattentive to the variability hinted at by Michelle Perrot.²¹⁷ It is true that when the first Italians were hired by Legras in the

²¹² “Their national blade.”

²¹³ There is no indication that he was.

²¹⁴ *XIX^e siècle*, 25.08.1900; *JSD*, 26.08.1900; *La Lanterne*, 26.08.1900;

²¹⁵ Gérard Noiriel, *Le Massacre des Italiens: Aigues-Mortes, 17 août 1893*, Paris: Fayard, 2010.

²¹⁶ See Archivio storico diplomatico, “Affari Politici,” Serie P, 1891-1916, Pac. 622, pos. 619, “Italiani in Francia, maltrattamenti ecc.”.

²¹⁷ Compare Leo Lucassen, “A Threat to the Native Workers: Italians in France (1870-1940),” in *Id.*, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850*, Urbana (IL), Chicago (IL): University of Illinois Press, 2005, 74–99, and Michelle Perrot, “Les rapports

spring of 1896, French workers seem to have been at first worried and upset. But that turmoil, illustrative of the climate in peak years of anti-Italian scare, had dissipated in a matter of days, and no particular incident had occurred.²¹⁸ It is not impossible that some residents of the cités, like Joseph Bour, even harboured favourable feelings towards Italians in general –he was a veteran from the Second Italian war of Independence.²¹⁹ In any case, while Italian child workers seem to have endured scoffing and occasional mistreatment at the hands of senior workers in subsequent years, that condition was not specific to Italian children, but rather affected young apprentices in general. In the own words of a French-born apprentice, “*durant le temps que j’ai travaillé à la verrerie Legras, les enfants étaient souvent maltraités par les ouvriers. Ils nous plaçaient sous le nez le verre en ébullition ou nous brûlaient nos vêtements.*”²²⁰ If true, the case of a young Italian glassworker pretending to be from Picardy to avoid mistreatment by fellow workers, could bear witness of some degree of anti-Italian resentment at Legras’s in the late 1890s. But it could also highlight that Picard and Italian accents were hardly distinguishable for other workers at the time, who may not have cared that much.²²¹ Mistaking an Italian or a Flemish accent for a Breton one was not unheard of in Saint-Denis.²²² By 1900, the significant number of Casertani at the factory, and the fact that they were not threatening anyone’s position in a context of full employment, may well have prevented anti-Italian hostility.²²³ It

des ouvriers français et des ouvriers étrangers (1871-1893),” *Bulletin de la société d’histoire moderne*, Vol. 58 (1960), No. 12, 4–9.

²¹⁸ *JSD*, 13.08.1896.

²¹⁹ FNA, BB/11/2294, 5892 x 89, Joseph Bour; SDMA, 1F21, 1896 census, vol. 2, 100 Av. de Paris.

²²⁰ “During my time at Legras’s, children were often mistreated by glassworkers. They would bring boiling glass close to our noses, or would burn our clothes.” Quote from Eugène Hamel, born 19.03.1895 in Clichy (Seine), employed for a few months at the glass factory in 1908-1909, in AVP D2U6 168, Préfecture de police, 1^{re} Division, 1^{er} Bureau, Rapport (copy), 27.12.1909.

²²¹ Raniero Paulucci di Calboli, “La Traite des petits italiens en France,” *La Revue des Revues*, 1.07.1897, 401.

²²² *JSD*, 30.10.1890.

²²³ Ugo Cafiero, “I fanciulli italiani nelle vetrerie francesi,” in *Opera di assistenza degli Operai Italiani emigrati in Europa e nel Levante*, *Bollettino bimensile edito dal Consiglio centrale*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (June 1901), 8; AVP, D3U6 111, 21.05.1907, D2U6 168, 26.10.1910; *JSD*, 29.05.1892; 21.01.1894; 1.07.1894; 21.07.1895, 21.07.1898.

was not until the first lay-offs caused by the Great Depression that sources bear traces of a reactivation, at the individual level, of those tensions at the glass factory.²²⁴

At the same time, differences in origins could reinforce conflicts that had other causes, and add oil to the fire. A few months before the fight at the Fête de la Plaine, a similar episode, albeit of lesser proportions, had occurred at Legras and had been settled with knives. It had apparently started with an argument between two glassworkers, Dominique Pirolli, a resident at No. 100, and one of his colleagues called Pierre Feisthauer. It had degenerated when the latter and his friends had thrown bricks at Dominique and other Italians from an upper window of the factory.²²⁵ The motive of the personal dispute is unclear, and little can be retrieved about the Pirollis – unrelated to the protagonists of the second chapter–, who had been in the Plaine for only a few months.²²⁶

As for Feisthauer, born in German Lorraine into a glassworkers family who migrated to Saint-Denis shortly after his birth,²²⁷ he was known to be a dangerous fellow. A few years earlier, he and a few friends had assaulted and seriously wounded a fellow glassworker of French origin at Legras.²²⁸ By 1900, the Feisthauers had long been associated with trouble in the Plaine-Saint-Denis. One of Pierre's brothers had

²²⁴ See the case of a glassworker fired in 1930, bitter to “be replaced by foreigners.” AVP, D1U10 729, Conseil de prud’hommes de la Seine, section pour les produits chimiques, 18.11.1930, 29.12.1930, Nos. 49231, 49348, François Moreau c. Sté Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies.

²²⁵ *Gil Blas*, 10.01.1900; *Le Petit Parisien*, 10.01.1900; *Le Matin*, 10.01.1900; *La Croix*, 11.01.1900; *La Justice*, 12.01.1900; *L’Éclaireur*, 14.01.1900.

²²⁶ See, however, U.S. National Archives, *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, M1509, Reel 1907764, Serial number 4253, Dominick Pirolli; U.S. National Archives at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Naturalization records, (*Roll 156*) *Petition Numbers 30561-30735, Dominick Pirolli, 3.04.1919*. Born in Casalcassinese, Acquafondata, on 2.07.1877, that Dominick Pirolli and the one from Saint-Denis in 1900 are likely to be the same person: he stated that he emigrated from France to the U.S., and had a scar above the right eye, which would exactly match the injury sustained in January 1900 as reported in the press. His second daughter Maria had been born on 17.02.1899 in Italy, which would imply that he came to the Plaine, at the earliest, in 1899. His descendant did not recall his passage in France though (Int. McAvoy, No. 72, 25.02.2018).

²²⁷ SDMA, E64, No. 94, Pierre Feisthauer, Claire Maas, décret de réintégration dans la nationalité française, 23.04.1881.

²²⁸ *JSD*, 3.02.1895.

taken part in a fight that had left one worker dead in a nearby banlieue.²²⁹ A cousin of his had stabbed a man eight times in a bar, and would later be found to be part of an organised criminal group.²³⁰ A brother of that cousin, who had lived at No. 100 in the mid-1890s, had been taking part in night robberies as early as the mid-1880s.²³¹ Proven ruffians like the Feisthauers displayed an over-sensitiveness that could rapidly trigger violence against people from very different backgrounds. Although racism may not have been entirely irrelevant, we would be at a loss to try and identify a consistent pattern of fight picking according to origin of their adversaries. If anything, the relationship of the family to Italy as a whole was not hostile. At least one of Pierre's uncles, who worked at Legras as well, had also taken part in the 1859 campaign alongside Italian troops.²³²

As for feuds based on romantic or sexual rivalries, the motive fuelling the Tari-Desrosier antagonism was not unprecedented in the Paris area, and could escalate into broader hostilities that had some sort of ethnic component to them.²³³ Years later, the xenophobia directed at North-African and Indochinese workers arrived during the Great War would also have sexual underpinnings.²³⁴ Also, while Raffaele Tari and one of the Desrosier brothers –probably Camille, as both were almost the same age– may have been initially motivated by their rivalry over the same girl, Pasquale and other

²²⁹ *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires*, 3.07.1894; *XIX^e siècle*, 4.07.1894; AVP, D4R1 779, Military registry, 1894, No. 1490, Antoine Feisthauer; SDMA, 1F21, 1896 Census, 133 av. de Paris, household No. 36.

²³⁰ AVP, D4R1 688, Military registry, 1892, No. 4036, Nicolas Feisthauer; *JSD*, 26.04.1894; AVP, D3U9 253, Cour d'appel de Paris, 15.02.1908, Feisthauer et autres; AD93, 1E66/338, Saint-Denis, Civil state records, marriages, 1920 (Jul.-Dec.), No. 1308, 30.10.1920.

²³¹ SDMA, 6I, CT234, Dépôt de sûreté de Saint-Denis, "État nominatif des individus arrêtés par mesure de police," 1885, Feisthauer Jean Nicolas, arrested on 2.02.1885 and 6.07.1885; AVP, D4R1 689, Military registers, 1892, No. 4493, Jean Nicolas Feisthauer;

²³² FNA, BB/11/1546, 2722 x 80, Adam Feisthauer.

²³³ *Le Petit Journal*, 1.10.1895, "Rixe entre Français et Italiens."

²³⁴ Marc Michel, "Mythes et réalités du concours colonial: soldats et travailleurs d'Outre-mer dans la guerre française," in Jean-Jacques Becker, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau (eds.), *Les Sociétés européennes et la guerre de 1914-1918*, proceedings of the symposium held in Nanterre and Amiens, 8-11 Dec. 1988, Nanterre: Université Paris X, 1990, 405.

friends who joined the battle may have fought the Derosiers' gang under the impulse of a broader, ethnic solidarity.

And yet in none of the accounts, even those reconstructing the dialogue between the main antagonists, were ethnic and racialised insults to be found. Certainly, the conservative newspapers would not have failed to print them, had there been the merest hint of one. In 1915, the murder of another glassworker from No. 96 would be similarly motivated by rivalries over women. But in that context, the murderers were all French-born and nobody claimed that origin played any role in the matter.²³⁵ In fact, it seems that an ethnically framed resentment, if there indeed was one, may not have been among the most relevant causes, nor results, of the 1900 battle. Personal grudges, in particular, seem to have been much more relevant. The young male protagonists belonged to rival street groups, if not gangs, and had a history of personal violence between them.

The Derosiers were a typical migrating glassworker family from Eastern France. The two brothers had been born in Portieux, Vosges, and Bar-sur-Seine, Aube; their parents had married in Passavant, Haute-Saône; and after a first stint in Saint-Denis, the family had lived for a while, in the mid-1890s, in Vannes-le-Châtel, Meurthe-et-Moselle.²³⁶ All of those were towns with a glass factory. Both Louis Julien Derosier, who went by the first name "Jules," and his younger brother Auguste, known as "Camille," had started to engage in violence, robberies and alcoholism at a young age.²³⁷ Interestingly, indirect evidence indicates that Camille was friends in the 1890s

²³⁵ APP, CB 92.11, 1915/152, 8.04.1915; *Le Journal*, *Le Petit Parisien*, 9.04.1915; *La Lanterne*, *Le Figaro*, 10.04.1915; *JSD*, 11.04.1915.

²³⁶ See references in following note.

²³⁷ Evidence of Louis Julien's nickname is found not only in *Le Radical*, 22.08.1900, where he is referred to as "Louis Jules," but also in AD10, Bar-sur-Seine, 1886 Census, 20 faubourg de la Gare, household No. 53, where he appears as "Jules" (his age being erroneously put at 22 instead of 12, probably to hide his unlawful employment at the local glass factory), while the brother named "Louis" in later censuses is missing. His parents François and Annette only recognised one child born before their marriage in 1869, a daughter, which confirms the 1874 date of birth for "Jules," consistent with both the accounts of the August 1900 fight and his 1902 marriage record (AD70, Passavant-la-Rochère,

with a boy whose father was an Italian shoemaker in the Plaine; a clue that would run counter to the stories of his deep-rooted racism against Italians.²³⁸ After the 1900 incident, Camille would be convicted multiple times for theft and violence, before being sentenced to life imprisonment in Guyana for rape in 1921.²³⁹ For his part, another Desrosier brother, Léon, would join the same gang, in the 1910s, as an Italian worker.²⁴⁰ Evidence suggests that Léon, during the First World War, was on friendly terms not only with that Italian, but also with a soldier born to parents from central Italy, and a North-African worker.²⁴¹ A half-brother of the Derosiers, Émile, was himself a convicted *apache*.*²⁴²

marriages, 1871, No. 4, 1.06.1871; SDMA, E321, 1902, marriages, No. 374, 23.08.1902). To confirm the identity of Auguste and Camille, compare AD10, Bar-sur-Seine, 1886 Census, 20 faubourg de la Gare, household No. 53; AD54, 6M33/547, Vannes-le-Châtel, 1896 Census, “Le Château,” household No. 110 (p. 11), and SDMA, 1F24, 1901 Census, 7 imp. Chaudron (p. 114). For their acts of violence in the early 1890s, see *Le Petit Journal*, 24.07.1891 (robberies in Aubervilliers and gunshots fired at a police officer by “Louis Derosier”); *JSD* 22.03.1894 (robbery in Saint-Denis by Camille Derosier).

²³⁸ The boy, named Armand Bosi, committed thefts with Émile Winckler in 1892; the presence of Camille in Émile’s group is documented in 1894. See *JSD*, 3.04.1892; *Le Figaro*, 6.04.1892; *JSD* 22.03.1894. His brother Auguste Bosi, sentenced to 1 month in jail for theft in September 1894, was probably involved in the same actions (AD76, 1R3027, Military Registers, 1897, No. 508, Auguste Bosi). On the Bosis’ origins (their father came from Albareto, Duchy of Parma), see SDMA, 1F17, 1886 Census, 1 rue du Landy, household No. 36; SDMA, 1F19, 1891 Census, 131 av. de Paris; AVP, V4E5164, Paris 19th, 1879, No. 1502, 5.06.1879, Armand Moyen (reconnu Bosi); MA Aubervilliers, 1E136, 1883, marriages, No. 47, 14.04.1883.

²³⁹ AVP, D4R1 1150, Military registers, 1902, No. 2344, Auguste Derosiers. See also *Le Petit Journal*, 31.10.1909; *Le Matin*, 30.04.1921. Auguste “Camille” lived at No. 96 in 1908 (AVP, D1U6 988, Tribunal correctionnel de Paris, 13.01.1908, Procureur de la République c. Derosier Auguste).

²⁴⁰ *Le Radical*, 31.01.1909; APP, CB 92.9, 1912/1086, 28.10.1912; APP, CB 92.18, 1922/343, 21.04.1922; AVP, D1U6 1500, 27.06.1919; APP, CB 92.11, 1915/695, 26.09.1915; APP, CB 92.12, 1916/39, 3.01.1916; 1916/274 27-28.03.1916; *JSD*, 9.04.1916.

²⁴¹ APP, CB 92.12, 1916/39, 3.01.1916; on Mathéo and his parents, see SDMA, Morts pour la France, 19860711/472; AD93, 1E66/379, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1917, No. 926 (transcription); SDMA, E 68, vol. 1, No. 211–2.

²⁴² See AD54, 6M33/547, Vannes-le-Châtel, 1896 Census, “Le Château,” household No. 110; APP, CB 92.10, 1913/1105, 16.12.1913; AD93, 1E66/383, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1919, vol. 1, No. 1010: 14.07.1919; AD93, 1E66/368, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1908, No. 179; AVP, D1U6 1013, 30.09.1908; D1U6 1240, 6.01.1914; D1U6 1500, 27.06.1919; *Le Matin*, 30.04.1921, 09.07.1924, 6.09.1925;

Camille and Jules Derosiers, who would live briefly at No. 96 in 1907-1908,²⁴³ would be reunited with their friends Abrioux who moved there in 1903.²⁴⁴ Before the 1900 fight, the Abrioux also had been involved in violence, although perhaps to a lesser extent than the Derosiers.²⁴⁵ As for Louis Wagner, who was credited with neutralizing Pasquale Reale despite his impaired eyesight, he had also been sentenced before, for damaging a fence –probably in the context of a robbery attempt.²⁴⁶ The Wagners were no more allergic to contact with Italians than the Derosiers. Louis's stepmother and half-sister were well-known midwives in the Plaine and delivered babies of Italian-born mothers.²⁴⁷ They also performed, when needed, another sort of services to pregnant women,²⁴⁸ rumors of which had led Mme Wagner to be temporarily been stripped of her municipal accreditation a few weeks before the fight.²⁴⁹ Overall, the Desrosiers' gang was not defined by any deep-seated anti-Italian sentiment.

As for the Italian-born Raffaele Tari, he had started working in glass factories at a very young age, just like the Derosiers –first in the Lyon area, then in Marseille, before settling in Saint-Denis in early 1900, where he had been joined at No. 100 by the rest of his family.²⁵⁰ A few days before the street fight, his younger brother, aged 10, had been fired by Legras's bosses after being caught as an underage worker by the labour

²⁴³ See AVP, D4R1 1150, Military registry, 1902, No. 2344; AD 93, 1E66/368, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1908, No. 179.

²⁴⁴ AVP, D4R1 829, 1895, No. 2115, René Abrioux; AVP, D4R1 921, 1897, No. 2099, Adrien Abrioux; D4R1 1202, 1903, No. 4379, Lionel Abrioux.

²⁴⁵ *Le Petit Parisien*, 21.10.1898; *JSD*, 23.10.1898.

²⁴⁶ SDMA, 1F21, 1896 Census, 103 Av. de Paris; AVP, D4R 1966, 1898, No. 1772, Louis Wagner. Wagner had just been discharged from military service in June 1900 due to an acute, double choroiditis.

²⁴⁷ SDMA, 1Q2, Bureau de bienfaisance, Délibérations de la commission, 26.07.1898; 1Q4, 27.02.1904, 29.03.1904; 1Q7, 28.11.1914; SDMA, E329, Saint-Denis, births, 1904, vol. 2, No. 1413, 9.12.1904; AD 93, 1E66/270, Saint-Denis, births, 1912, vol. 2, No. 1075, 20.08.1912.

²⁴⁸ APP, CB 92.1, 1905/315, 11.04.1905.

²⁴⁹ SDMA, 1Q4, 29.03.1904.

²⁵⁰ FNA, BB/11/8316, 21026 x 24, Joseph [Raphaël] Tari; BB/11/12864, 2182 x 30, Dominique Tari; Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Procès-verbal d'interrogatoire de François Saverio Tari, 1.09.1901 in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, No. 49750, *doc. cit.*

inspector.²⁵¹ Family friends of the Taris included the Della Valles, the Grecos and the Gabrieles, and it is plausible that some of the boys from these families joined the fight.²⁵² Not much is known about the Tari brothers in the early 1900s, except that they rode bicycles, which assured them of a certain standing among their fellow glassworkers.²⁵³

While Raffaele Tari may have held a grudge against Camille Derosier over a lady friend, the Reales had their own motives to resent the opposite group. For one thing, Pasquale and his brother Nicola were probably just as prone to violence as the Derosiers. An indication of this is that they would be involved in another violent episode on the avenue de Paris in 1902, injuring three workers coming back this time from the fête du Landy.²⁵⁴ Described as “*rôdeurs*” by one newspaper, they were probably after their victims’ money or tobacco.²⁵⁵ It is also likely that the character referred to as “Maurice Reale” at the top of this chapter, who got into a fight in the Spring of 1899, was indeed Pasquale: same age, same address, and no mention of any Maurizio Reale matching that profile in either Saint-Denis or Arpino archives.

Also, and perhaps more significantly, a year before the 1900 fight, Pasquale’s brother Nicola had witnessed an Italian friend of his stabbed to death on the Avenue, near the cités.²⁵⁶ The press had already interpreted the action as the symptom of a wider conflict between French and Italians, and the highest authorities in France and Italy had been swiftly informed about the matter.²⁵⁷ That time, a degree of ethnic hatred had

²⁵¹ AD93, 4U7/985, Service de l’Inspection du Travail, 12e section de la Seine, procès-verbal du 16.07.1900, (Dominique Tari and Félix Tedeschi).

²⁵² SDMA, E313, births, 1901, vol. 1, No. 79, 19.01.1901; AD93, 1E66/312, Saint-Denis, mariages, 1906, Vol. 1, No. 440, 25/08.1906; SDMA, E351, mariages, 1907, vol. 2, No. 630, 16.11.1907.

²⁵³ AD93, 4U7/1005, Brigade de gendarmerie d’Épinay, procès-verbal c. Antonio Pascal Tari, 7.06.1903; APP, CB 82.4, 1904/521-523, 29.05.1904.

²⁵⁴ *Le Matin*, 30.06.1902; *Le Petit parisien*, 30.06.1902; *JSD*, 3.07.1902.

²⁵⁵ *Le XIX^e siècle*, 1.07.1902 (“prowlers”).

²⁵⁶ APP, BA 914, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Rapport, 5.04.1898; *JSD*, 7.04.1898; *Gil Blas*, 8.04.1898; *Le XIX^e siècle*, 23.07.1898.

²⁵⁷ AMAE, CPCOM/90, Correspondance politique et commerciale, “Nouvelle série,” Italie, Italiens en France, 1897-1899, “Italiens en France. Incident Diruscio.” The French minister of Foreign Affairs,

indeed occupied centre stage. One of the French combatants had allegedly started the fight by defiantly asking Nicola Reale if he knew that “*un Italien a tué un Français*” at the other Legras factory, in Pantin, the day before.²⁵⁸ The *Journal de Saint-Denis* made it sound even more racist by reporting that the expression used had been “*un sale Italien*,” which was not what was represented in other papers.²⁵⁹ But once again, the picture was certainly more nuanced than it appeared at first sight. The eventual murderers of Nicola’s friend were notorious apaches. One of them, an alcoholic, would later beat his parents and try to assassinate his wife.²⁶⁰ Another committed violent robberies on the street,²⁶¹ and his brother once threatened to kill a bar-owner.²⁶² A few days after the murder, the gang had tried to rob vendors on the Plaine market.²⁶³ Edmond Derhée, mentioned in the first lines of this dissertation, was part of that murderous gang, along with his brother; Edmond had already been convicted eight times by the summer of 1900, and had spent more than five years in jail.²⁶⁴ One of the Derhée brothers even barely escaped an assassination attempt by a rival group.²⁶⁵ There is no proof that this bunch and the Derosiers’ intersected. But as the big fight broke out in August 1900, Nicola and Pasquale may have been waiting for an opportunity to get their revenge against what they perceived as the same sort of thugs who had murdered their friend a few months before.²⁶⁶

Another important parameter in this kind of confrontation had to do with gender. Two of the main conditions enabling violence, drinking and the possession of

informed by a telegram on 8.04.1898, passed on the information to the Italian ambassador on 12.04.1898.

²⁵⁸ *Gil Blas*, 5.4.1898; *JSD*, 7.04.1898; *Le XIX^e siècle*, 23.07.1898 (“an Italian has killed a Frenchman.”) Remarkably, the Italian murderer from Pantin would end up being sentenced to twenty years of forced labour, as opposed to just one year behind bars for Nicola’s friend’s murderer.

²⁵⁹ *JSD*, 21.07.1898; *Le XIX^e siècle*, 23.07.1898. (“A dirty Italian.”)

²⁶⁰ *Le Journal*, 18.11.1900; *La Lanterne*, 24.06.1907.

²⁶¹ *La Lanterne*, 26.09.1900.

²⁶² *Le Journal*, 1.02.1901.

²⁶³ *Le Radical*, 24.04.1898.

²⁶⁴ AVP, D4R1 566, Military registers, 1889, No. 3011, Edmond Derhé. He was sentenced 48 times between 1888 and 1913. See also APP, CB 73.6 (La Villette), 1897/416, 23.03.1897.

²⁶⁵ *La Lanterne*, 25.04.1898; *Le Soleil*, 11.05.1900; *La Lanterne*, 26.09.1900.

²⁶⁶ On the spirit of revenge among apaches, see *JSD*, 24.10.1915, “Une vendetta à Aubervilliers.”

weapons, were disproportionately more likely to be met by males. So much so that those two things became a requirement to show off one's masculinity. We have no way to know whether the coveted lover attended the fight, but it was no surprise that Raffaele and Camille had incentives to demonstrate to her, and to other witnesses, that they were the most fearless and the most masculine combatants. In the Plaine and in the tenement block, women were not that rare to indulge in heavy drinking.²⁶⁷ But few were seen with guns and knives. Those who did certainly embraced, to a certain extent, codes of masculinity, and their challenge of gender roles did nothing to prevent the cycle of alcohol, insults, and physical violence associated with being a man.²⁶⁸ Moreover, contemporary accounts indicate that young female workers were exposed at an early age to sexualised indecencies, and even male anatomy of senior workers in glass factories.²⁶⁹ This sort of violence probably contributed to bring a number of women to subscribe to a culture of hyper-masculinity which they had witnessed from an early age, and validating the hot-tempered reactions of the kind of the 1900 episode.

On the whole, the 1900 free-for-all and other analogous episodes are indicative of the variety of motives that could bring residents to engage in violence branded as inter-ethnic or international. Criminal history, personal rivalries actually seem to have been much more relevant than ethno-national identifications, which if not entirely absent, were certainly of much less importance than what the newspapers of the era had their readers believe. A closer look at verbal violence tends to confirm this assessment, with a notable exception.

²⁶⁷ APP, CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918; CB 92.21, 1925/170, 289 bis, 24.01.1925-6.02.1925; 1925/164, 28.01.1925-4.02.1925.

²⁶⁸ See the case of Madeleine Tressel in *La Presse*, 4.06.1903, "La belle chiffonnière"; APP, CB 92.2, 1905/875, 27.08.1905, 1905/1138, 11.11.1905; *La Lanterne*, 2.01.1906, "Le poignard empoisonné."

²⁶⁹ Charles Delzant, *Le travail de l'enfance dans les verreries*, Paris: Les temps nouveaux, 1912, 17.

3.2.3. Antagonising words

In following years, sources record only one documented instance, in the Plaine, of a racial slur thrown by a French-born worker at an Italian youngster, who happened to live at No. 100. Aged 15 and born in the province of Caserta, he was called “*macaroni*” and “*macar*” by a Saint-Denis-born colleague of his, aged 14, who then dealt him a knife-blow to the neck in an argument at the factory over a broken glass-bottle.²⁷⁰ As opposed to ordinary Plainards, the press loved the derogatory term and used it frequently.²⁷¹ In the neighbourhood, the insult was almost absent. When another Italian, who had lived in the cités for years, was copiously insulted in 1914 by a French colleague of his for refusing to join a union, he said he was called a “*con*,” and only that. It is very unlikely that he would have forgotten to report a racial slur if he had heard one, or that police officers would have failed to mention it in the original account and the subsequent, detailed, summary they inscribed in the analytical register.²⁷² Similarly, Spanish migrants in the Plaine seem to have been by and large spared racial insults in the early decades of their presence, beyond occasional jibes between schoolchildren.²⁷³

Things started to change during the First World War. National categories became more popular. A North-African worker fatally wounded in a bar fight managed, before dying, to refer to his assailants as “*Anglais*” and “*Espagnols*.”²⁷⁴ In another incident, a French-born worker referred to his opponent as “*l’Espagnol*,” and “*cet étranger*.”²⁷⁵ Another former resident at No. 96 who remained the concierge of No. 94 for decades was remembered in her family as having been scared by the arrival of Spaniards in the

²⁷⁰ APP, CB 92.4, 1908/409, 29.03.1908.

²⁷¹ JSD, 30.09.1900; 1.09.1901; 14.08.1902.

²⁷² APP, CB 92.11, 1914/550, 14.07.1914.

²⁷³ Int. Aksouh (No. 33), 30.09.2016; Natacha Lillo, “Espagnols en ‘banlieue rouge’...,” *op. cit.*, 715.

²⁷⁴ APP, CB 92.14, 1918/172, 14.02.1918. Another one reported being assaulted by an “*Espagnol*,” who confessed to hitting “*l’Arabe*.” (APP, CB 92.15, 1918/1364, 23.12.1918).

²⁷⁵ APP, CB 92.17, 1920/712, 28.08.1920; 1920/764, 14.09.1920.

neighbourhood, because of their guns. It may well be that the 1925 murder of the lodger left an enduring imprint in her mind, conflating violence and Spaniards – although as we have seen, guns and knives had been ubiquitous long before that.²⁷⁶ Had she been already in the Plaine by the time of the 1900 gunfight, she would probably have associated gun violence with a broader group of migrants.

Even though the outbreak of the Great War did trigger, in general, a flurry of derogatory terms against actual or perceived “Germans,” their frequency remained extremely low in the Plaine compared to the centre of Saint-Denis. This is quite remarkable given the number of Plainards from Alsace and Lorraine who had, as highlighted above, very distinct German-sounding accents. Singularly, the only family of the area who remained identified as Austro-German after the first few days of the war were the Ravellis. The father came from Mezzana, in Austrian Trentino, and his wife from La Tour, in the French Alps, and both had been living in the Plaine for decades with their respective families. Despite being longtime Plainards, they soon had to face, at least temporarily, the full weight of the harsh measures against enemy aliens.²⁷⁷ This scar certainly constructed them as Germans, leading to this very singular exchange of insults in 1920 in which the French-born Mme Ravelli called a neighbour “*embusqué*,” a widespread insult of the First World War directed at those suspected of cravenly escaping military duty, while her neighbour called her “*tête de Boche*.”²⁷⁸

²⁷⁶ Int. Le Bozec (No. 15), 15.04.2016. A former resident at No. 98, Marguerite Guébin was the concierge at No. 94 from 1908 to the 1940s. See also chapter 2, note 32.

²⁷⁷ On the Ravellis, see APP, CB 92.11, 1914/634, 27-28.08.1914; SDMA, E302, Saint-Denis, marriages, 3.01.1898-31.12.1898, No. 326; E323, Saint-Denis, births, 01.01.1903-03.07.1903, No. 177; *Journal officiel de la République française. Lois et décrets*, 1912, p. 1688, 23.02.1912; 1915, p. 2394, 20.04.1915; *Bulletin de la Chambre de commerce de Paris*, 1915, p. 681, 12.06.1915; SDMA, 1F22, 1896 census, vol. 3, 9 rue du Cornillon; AD93, 1E66/367, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1907, No. 79, 16.01.1907. The shares of Mr. Ravelli’s company were sequestered, and although it is unclear whether they were eventually deported to a concentration camp or not, it is very probable that they were targeted by an administrative order to that effect. See Jean-Claude Farcy, *Les camps de concentration français de la Première guerre mondiale, 1914-1920*, Paris: Anthropos, 1995.

²⁷⁸ AD93, 4U7/735, 5.03.1920, Chaput c. Ravelli.

This use of ethnic slurs as a way to open a symbolic rift between oneself and others, and thereby create an insider-outsider dynamic, was not absent from the contacts between the occupants of the cités. In 1911, an Italian-born resident at No. 96 employed at the Mouton wire-drawing factory –the same who would later be insulted by a colleague for not joining a union– had an argument with a superior. Although that man was a French citizen born in Liège, Belgium, the Italian called him a “*Prussien*.”²⁷⁹ Insulting was thus a performative way of claiming more legitimacy than the other, branded more or less as an outsider, if not as a traitor. The exact same slur had been heard among glassworkers against Alsatians and Lorrainers in the 1880s and 1890s.²⁸⁰ But those words had since faded in the background and barely resurfaced during the Great War.²⁸¹ Class, in the 1911 case, intersected with the ethnic rhetoric, no matter the actual origin of the manager; in the worker’s later argument with his unionised colleague, ethnicity failed to intersect with class, as it did not occur to his adversary to use origin to smear him. In 1911, another manager at the same Mouton factory was mobbed and beaten on the street by two of his subordinates, over the firing of one of them, which was not unprecedented in the neighbourhood.²⁸² The manager was Mr. Ponte, a resident at No. 100 from Genoa, and his attackers two young workers from the province of Caserta, one of whom lived at No. 96: as they called him “*salaud, cochon, fumier*,” they probably viewed him as an enemy, irrespective of his Italian roots.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ The name of the Italian-born worker was Jean-Baptiste Tarsia. AD93, 4U7/690, 12.05.1911, Wagener (“Wagner”) c. Tarsia; SDMA, 1K1/55, Electoral register, 1911, Wagener Jean Nicolas.

²⁸⁰ In 1894, the father of a neighbour of Tarsia’s at No. 96 in the 1910s, had been called “*grand fainéant, Prussien*” in the courtyard of Legras’s factory. AD93, 4U7/506, 5.07.1894, Veuve Hazard c. Greiner père; 5.07.1894, Chazal c. Greiner père et fils.

²⁸¹ AD93, 4U7/984, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis Sud, Procès-verbal, Leroy Auguste c. Bourgeois Auguste et Henri, 13.06.1900.

²⁸² JSD, 28.12.1893.

²⁸³ APP, CB 92.7, 1911/1085, 8.11.1911.

It seems, on that score, that national categories and xenophobic fears were partly gendered, targeting male and female migrants somewhat differently.²⁸⁴ From what survives in the sources, national categories appear to have been directed at men more than at women, perhaps because the latter spent less time in the presence of people from different origins, reducing the likelihood of combination of ethnicity and femininity in such dynamics. Insults directed at women in general, and at inhabitants of the cités in particular, do not seem to have been less frequent than those thrown at men; they were only revolving mostly around their role as mothers and wives. In an episode we already mentioned, one resident at No. 100, from Aube, called another from Vosges “*grosse vache, gros cul, grosse putain*.”²⁸⁵ A few years later, Mme Ravelli was accused by an irate neighbour of having bought her house with stolen money, and called “*vache, putain, pouffiasse procureuse*.”²⁸⁶ Neither Mme Ravelli nor her neighbour, who both threw insults at the other, used an ethnically charged rhetoric. This may be because both of them had married ethnic Italians, even though Mme Ravelli was technically Austro-Hungarian –but not yet Germanised by the World War. In yet another brawl on the avenue between two women from Brittany and Belgium during the war, only sexual insults were recorded.²⁸⁷ Sexual depravity and dishonesty appear to have been much more prevalent in attacks against women; they were, by contrast, all but absent from tense exchanges between men, except in the attempts to slander their wives and daughters.

²⁸⁴ See Nancy L. Green, “Changing Paradigms in Migration Studies: From Men to Women to Gender,” in Donna R. Gabaccia, Mary Jo Maynes (eds.), *Gender History Across Epistemologies*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013, 266.

²⁸⁵ AD93, 4U7/533, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, 1896 (10), 14.10.1896, Dion c. époux Robert. On Ms. Dion, see SDMA, E277, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1893, No. 489, 28.12.1893; on Ms. Robert, AD10, 4E03511, Bayel, marriages, 1873, No. 5, 6.10.1873.

²⁸⁶ AD93, 4U7/668, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, 1908 (6), 28.08.1908, 4.09.1908, Époux Laugero c. époux Ravelli. “*Procureuse*” was a slang word referring to former sex-workers whose business was to “procure” young prostitutes for older men. On the origin of Mr. Laugero, see SDMA, 1F27, 1911 Census, 22 rue de la Justice, p. 137.

²⁸⁷ APP, CB 92.12, 1916/114, 16/21.01.1916.

When they had indeed an ethno-national connotation, words by which residents were identified by others revealed the growing relevancy of ethnic categories, and yet could still differ from their actual origin. According to Elvira Greco, when she married her husband Albert whose family had resided at No. 100 around 1900, their origin difference was the object of much talk. Not so much because Elvira had been born in the province of Verona, far from Albert's family's roots in the province of Caserta. Rather because paradoxically, although the groom was the one who had been born in Saint-Denis, she was the one referred to by her in-laws as the "French princess." As she remembers it, this was due to her manners, her looks and her reasonably well-off family.²⁸⁸ Years later, in the 1940s, the only French woman residing at No. 100 would be alternatively nicknamed "*la Française*" or "*l'étrangère*" by Spanish and Italian residents, attesting to a comparable dynamic of symbolic reversal of ethno-national identifications.²⁸⁹

All in all, the only category of people of which we can say that they actually faced racial slurs on a regular basis were North-Africans, in particular Kabyles. Starting in 1915, they came to the Plaine on a voluntary or constrained basis to supplement the male-depleted workforce in the armament factories. The popularity of racial slurs such as "*bicot*" and "*sidi*" did extend to the Plaine.²⁹⁰ Those labels were so commonplace that Spanish workers could use them to refer to the North-Africans.²⁹¹ Even if "aggressive racism"²⁹² against these workers may not have been the dominant attitude in France as a whole, troubling incidents did occur the Plaine. On a tram, an argument between a few Algerians and the driver translated into insults by the passengers, a few

²⁸⁸ Int. Greco (No. 30), 25.08.2016. On Mme Greco's husband, see AD93, 1E66/271, Saint-Denis, births, 1913, vol. 1, No. 215, 15.02.1913.

²⁸⁹ Int. Gallacio (No. 56), 1.12.2016 ("The French woman," "the stranger.") The class component was also present in this second case. Mme Gallacio said that the woman "*était toujours bien maquillée; je la trouvais belle*." ("She always wore a beautiful make-up; I thought she was beautiful.")

²⁹⁰ APP, CB 92.12, 125/1916, 6.02.1916; APP, CB 92.13, 1916/973, 20.11.1916; APP, CB 92.15, 1918/1267, 11.11.1918; APP, CB 92.15, 1919/214, 26.02.1919-2.03.1919; APP, CB 92.15, 1919/219, 2.03.1919; APP, CB 92.18, 1922/41, 22.10.1921; APP, CB 92.18, 1922/297, 7.04.1922.

²⁹¹ APP, CB 92.14, 1918/208 et 209, 23.02.1918.

²⁹² Gilbert Meynier, *L'Algérie révélée...*, op. cit., 77.

of whom stepped off and ended up beating other North-Africans who had nothing to do with the incident.²⁹³ In the northwestern part of the neighbourhood, Moroccans were assaulted by Frenchmen who had vowed to rough up the first *sidi* who would come out of a bistrot –an incident that may have been triggered by resentment over one of the “colonials” having an affair with a French woman.²⁹⁴

It is quite possible, in that context, that the inhabitants of 96-102 Av. de Paris shared a racialised vision of North-African workers. An important group of those was stationed at the end of the rue Proudhon, a mere 500 meters from the cités. In October 1919, some of these colonial workers were spotted in the *débit** at No. 96. At that time, the bistro was run by another recent immigrant, from Greece. As he had thrown the “*trois Arabes*” out of his bar, along with another client, an argument had erupted.²⁹⁵

This isolated incident could suggest that a majority of residents subscribed to the racial categorisation of North-African workers as Arabs (or *sidis*). At the same time, the decade-old diversity of origins in the cités, including that of the new bar owner, might have made colonial workers comparatively more welcome in the residents’ usual sociability spaces than elsewhere in the area. In fact, the way they were perceived by residents must have been quite ambivalent. For instance, French and Spanish residents who had had experience in the colonial context may have felt more familiarity, and at the same time an engrained cultural racism towards North-Africans.²⁹⁶ At the same time, the colonial workers could also adopt different strategies in their interaction with the inhabitants of the cités and their peers. Kabyles, in

²⁹³ APP, CB 92.14, 1917/464, 13.05.1917.

²⁹⁴ APP, CB 92.16, 1919/310, 3.03.1919; 1919/447, 26-27.06.1919.

²⁹⁵ APP, CB 92.16, 1919/707, 2.10.1919.

²⁹⁶ On the notion of “cultural racism,” see Ramón Grosfoguel, “Introduction: ‘Cultural Racism’ and Colonial Caribbean Migrants in Core Zones of the Capitalist World-Economy,” *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (1999), 412–3. Residents who had served in North Africa include Eugène Jean Péchié (AVP, D4R1 697, 1892, No. 3088); Pierre Alphonse Hector (AVP, D4R1 644, 1902, No. 408); Estanislao Gonzalez (FNA, 19790858/152, 17489 x 51). Daniel Abad would also serve in Spanish Morocco but only after his passage at No. 96 Av. de Paris (FNA, 19770901/52, 28392 x 39).

particular, who were being ethnicised as Arabs by locals who did not know any better, may have claimed that appellation for themselves, as other minorities did in other contexts.²⁹⁷



This chapter has shown that the residents' interpersonal networks and hostilities were based on diverse factors. Common assumptions about the relevance of ethnic identifications are not necessarily consistent with the most frequent patterns of interaction observed in our particular case. As one set of references in a variety of motives, the salience of ethno-national categories seems to have been oscillating over the period depending both on the people's origin, and on its intersectional articulation with other categories of difference. While Spaniards displayed a stronger tendency to maintain networks at ethno-national level, for others micro-regional bonds seemed to prevail until they gave way to much broader networks. It also appears that origin-based identifications were dominant in positive interactions, whereas antagonisms, when not based on in-group grudges, were often driven by non-cultural factors and cycles of violence and retaliation in which some –mostly young males– engaged in the Plaine.

To further understand the construction of differences, we also need to account for the role that public institutions played in shaping people's identifications. Let us now shift the focus to nationality and citizenship, understood in their legal and political senses, in order to see if, when and why official distinctions may have mattered in the residents' lives.

²⁹⁷ Nancy Green, *Du Sentier à la 7^e avenue*, *op. cit.*, 379.

CHAPTER 4

Of states and people: micro boundary-making along and across national lines

Before the Great War, the residents' wallets were thin. Along with banknotes, middle-aged men went around with their military papers and little else. Women often carried no official paper at all, except for bread cards when the family was entitled to food handouts.¹ Men's electoral cards were usually left at home, as were receipts of rent payments, membership cards of societies and unions, the odd bankbook and, after 1910, annual pension cards for the few people over 65.² When they were not French citizens, residents would carry a few more sheets of paper –a birth certificate, a receipt of their mandatory residency declaration, occasionally passports and work certificates.³

The period of the Great War saw a massive inflation of papers. The list of documents lost by at least six residents at No. 100, four at No. 96, and one at No. 102 –three Italian, seven Spaniards and one Alsatian– reveals as much. It included a whole array of new papers, including residency permits; receipts of identity cards; passports with visas; proofs of military exemption; benefit cards for refugees and soldiers' spouses.⁴ Not to mention the coal, sugar, milk and other food stamps issued by the

¹ On bread cards, see e.g. SDMA, 1Q2, 20.04.1898. To the municipal bread card would be added another one, introduced by the State for purposes of food rationing in late 1917 (see Henri Sellier, Auguste Bruggeman, Marcel Poète, *Paris pendant la guerre*, Paris, New Haven (CT): Publications de la Dotation Carnegie pour la paix internationale, P.U.F., Yale University Press, 1926, 14–5).

² APP, CB 92.9, 1912/916, 20.09.1912; SDMA, CT96, Letter from the Préfet de la Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis (about M. Racollier), 17.11.1921.

³ AD93, 4U7/472, 25.04.1890, Versigny c. Baumann; APP, CB 92.8, 1912/649, 30.06.1912; CB 92.10, 1914/2, 18.12.1913–1.01.1914.

⁴ APP, CB 92.8, 1912/649, 30.06.1912; CB 92.10, 1914/2, 18.12.1913–1.01.1914; CB 92.12 [unbound, in CB 92.27], 1915/732, 6.10.1915; CB 92.12, 1916/3, 3.01.1916; 1916/384, 1–6.05.1916;

municipal authorities, which inhabitants of the cités also frequently claimed to have lost.⁵

And yet for all the increase in State control and intervention brought about by the conflict, the “identity revolution,” as Gérard Noiriel has called it, had started much earlier.⁶ Residents had long faced censuses and, as far as men were concerned, elections. They had appeared before law enforcement, pleaded their cases in courts. Their names and other personal information had been written down in registers of all sorts around Saint-Denis, from city hall to the local church, the police station, the factory, the *garnis**, the cooperative and the local shops. Newspapers, which relished publishing the identity, address and nationality of individuals involved in eye-catching *faits divers*, also contributed to the identification boom.⁷

From the late 19th century, identification procedures became a crucial way of determining “who is in” and “who is out” of the nation, at a time when both the rights and obligations of citizens and foreigners expanded rapidly.⁸ As the French society became “nationalised,”⁹ legal citizenship came to be the primary criterion of membership of the Nation. And yet this “paper nationality”¹⁰ was neither absolutely

1916/392, 10.05.1916; CB 92.13, 1917/116, 3.02.1917; CB 92.14, 1917/648, 3.07.1917; 1917/788, 20.08.1917; 1917/809, 28.08.1917; 1918/50, 5.01.1918; 1918/219, 18.02.1918 CB 92.15, 1918/434, 10.04.1918.

⁵ APP, CB 92.14, 1917/777, 13.08.1917; CB 92.15, 1918/1208-1213, 1.11.1918; 1918/1366, 26.12.1918; 1919/26, 9.01.1919; SDMA, CT145, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to the director of the Maggi company (about the dairy shop at No. 96 Av. de Paris), 18.01.1919.

⁶ Gérard Noiriel, *Réfugiés et sans-papiers. La République face au droit d'asile, XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1991, 156; *Id.* (ed.), *L'Identification. Genèse d'un travail d'État*, Paris: Belin, 2007.

⁷ Anne-Claude Ambroise-Rendu, *Petits récits des désordres ordinaires: les faits divers dans la presse française des débuts de la III^e République à la Grande Guerre*, Paris: Seli Arslan, 2004.

⁸ John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport Surveillance, Citizenship, and the State*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 121.

⁹ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*, Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press, 1976.

¹⁰ Marco Meriggi, “La cittadinanza di carta,” *Storica*, 2000, No. 16, 107–20.

necessary nor sufficient to enjoy citizenship in the sense of a social and cultural membership, which also involved imperial, class, gender or age distinctions.¹¹

These legal and political mechanisms have too often been approached in an exclusively top-down manner, laying more emphasis on the legal framework than on the people to whom they applied.¹² It is only recently, in the wake of a more subtle approach to citizenship, that a critical understanding of official categories has started to take hold in historical studies of migration.¹³ Thus far, we have shown how the relevance of origin and ethnicity could vary greatly depending on the residents' interactions with each other. Also, we have mentioned how age, class and gender roles could be more plastic than anticipated, through various patterns of spatial mobility. How about nationality? How did the official demarcation between nationals and foreigners work in the *cités*? To what extent did residents subscribe to, or subvert this division?

The point of this last chapter is to assess, from both the residents' and the public institutions' standpoint, the extent to which states –broadly conceived here as public authorities– took part in people's identifications by pulling the levers of nationality. At that time, the institutionalisation of social relations and growing overlap between the state and the nation replaced the hitherto hazy distinction between national and non-nationals with a more consequential system of difference.¹⁴ But while that new national discourse could fragment or cement parts of the residents' population, it might

¹¹ See Gilles Bourque, Jules Duchastel, Éric Pineault, "L'incorporation de la citoyenneté," *Sociologie et sociétés*, Vol. 31 (1999), No. 2, 41–64.

¹² See e.g. Marie-Claude Blanc-Chaléard, Caroline Douki, Nicole Dyonet, Vincent Milliot (eds.), *Police et migrants. France 1667-1939*, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2001; Ilse About, "Les fondations d'un système national d'identification policière en France (1893-1914). Anthropométrie, signalements et fichiers," *Genèses*, No. 54 (2004), 28–52.

¹³ In particular with Alexis Spire, *Étrangers à la carte. L'administration de l'immigration en France (1945-1975)*, Paris: Grasset, 2005; Mary D. Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic*, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ Maxim Silverman, *Deconstructing the Nation: Immigration, Racism and Citizenship in Modern France*, London, New York (NY): Routledge, 1992, 29; Gershon Shafir (ed.), *The Citizenship Debates: A Reader*, Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

also have no significant effect. The inhabitants of the cités were able to act upon, countervail or ultimately alter the mechanisms of national identifications that required their participation.¹⁵ In that regard, the Great War offered new configurations which need to be addressed, in order to measure whether they differed from what came before and what followed.

First, let us examine the multiple interactions with institutions in which national allegiances came into play. Then, our focus will move to a crucial micro-event, naturalisation. Lastly, we will look at the way in which the Great War reconfigured nation and nationality in the cités.

4.1. When nationality mattered

Census

Over the course of their lives, the residents' interactions with French authorities and foreign states could enact symbolic or material differences, based in particular on nationality. As scholars have already pointed out, in the immigration context people were often exposed to more contact with national institutions, and much more frequently identified as nationals of their country, as opposed to their native region.¹⁶ One of those interactions was the census, conducted in principle every five years in

¹⁵ For socio-institutional approaches of negotiations between migrants and authorities, see e.g. Mary D. Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic*, *op. cit.*; Dorothee Schneider, *Crossing Borders: Migration and Citizenship...*, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Matteo Sanfilippo, "Nationalisme, 'italianité' et émigration aux Amériques (1830-1990)," *European Review of History-Revue européenne d'histoire*, Vol. 2 (1995), No. 2, 177–91; Pasquale Verdicchio, *Bound by Distance: Rethinking Nationalism Through the Italian Diaspora*, London: Cranbury, 1997; Jean-Charles Vegiante, "L'émigration comme facteur d'italianisation au tournant du siècle," in *Vert, blanc, rouge. L'identité nationale italienne. Actes du colloque des 24 et 25 avril 1998 de l'Université de Rennes*, Rennes: LURPI, 1999, 223–43; Mary C. Waters, *Black Identities. West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities*, Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 1999; Ewa Morawska, "Immigrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of This Great Wave and the Last," in Gary Gerstle, John Mollenkopf (eds.), *E Pluribus Unum? Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, New York (NY), Russell Sage, 2001, 175–212; Mark Choate, *Emigrant Nation...*, *op. cit.*

Saint-Denis during our period.¹⁷ Individual forms were compiled into household folders, in turn assembled into house reports, and eventually aggregated into comprehensive registers in duplicate.¹⁸

Figure 1: The model of individual form for the 1886 census operations in the Seine¹⁹

¹⁷ Save for 1906 and 1916 (see chapter 1). On the role of censuses in constructing nationality, see Éric Guichard, Gérard Noiriel (eds.), *Construction des nationalités et immigration dans la France contemporaine*, Paris: Presses de l'École normale supérieure, 1997.

¹⁹ Note that the requirement concerning birthplaces was not met by census agents in Saint-Denis.

however, depended as much on the residents' own declarations as on their interpretation by census officials.²¹ A close analysis and the crossing of sources reveal that the inhabitants at Nos. 96-102 Av. de Paris had a say in shaping their "census nationality."²² They could even alter their response to fit the categories that were presented to them.²³ In the cités, Alsatians and Lorrainers from the annexed territories were, initially, registered as French, although many had lost their French nationality and had yet to recover it.²⁴ The residents' influence also filters through when it comes to the national categories themselves. An elderly woman identified as "Prussian," one of her neighbours said "Bavaria"; these obsolete national appellations suggest that they understood the question as referring to their country of birth, as opposed to some of their French-born neighbours from Lorraine, who were noted as "German."²⁵

In other instances, traces survive of the difficulty for officials to deal with naturalised citizens, and perhaps a reluctance to take what residents said at face value. Some of the people officially recorded as Germans, Italians or Spaniards in the registers, based most probably on their accent and place of birth, had in fact recently acquired or recovered the French nationality; they could not have forgotten to mention it.²⁶ Sometimes uncertainty prevailed, and census officials did not press further:

²¹ Census officials, appointed by the Mayor, were in general municipal employees and locals in literate professions: clerks, teachers, etc. For an example, see below, note 135.

²² On the people's agency in navigating national and legal categories, see Mary D. Lewis, "Geographies of Power: The Tunisian Civic Order, Jurisdictional Politics, and Imperial Rivalry in the Mediterranean, 1881-1935," *Journal of Modern History*, No. 80 (2008), 791-830.

²³ Historians who have not attempted to cross-check multiple sources have remained on the threshold of this issue. They suspected mistakes and inconsistencies in the census, but were eventually unable to actually document them. See e.g. Natacha Lillo, "Espagnols en 'banlieue rouge'...", *op. cit.*, 187-8.

²⁴ For instance, the family of M. Cantin, the shoemaker, was listed as French, but was technically German. Compare SDMA, 1F17, 1886 Census, 100-102 Av. de Paris, and FNA, BB/11/1976, 1919 x 87, Auguste Léopold Cantin. For other examples of German residents listed as French in 1886, see FNA, BB/11/2186, 9792 x 88, François Engelmann; BB/11/2222, 13359 x 88, Jacques Buchholzer and Louise Wagenheim; BB/11/2222, 13359 x 88, Chrétien Lentz and Catherine Baumann; BB/11/1650, 3545 x 82, Louis Herholt and Caroline Wymann.

²⁵ SDMA, 1F19, 1891 Census, 100 Av. de Paris, Barbe Schmitt, and 1F24, 1901 Census, 100 Av. de Paris, Philippe Steinmann. They were respectively born in Rhineland and Bavarian Palatinate before the German unification.

²⁶ Raphaël and Catherine Spreisser (chapter 3, p. 288); Domenica Carbone née Cocorocchia and her son Roger (FNA, 34199 x 27 BB/11/10398, Carbone and SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census, 100 Av. de Paris);

“Alsace-Lorraine” proved a convenient national label for residents unsure about which category they fell into.²⁷ National distinctions between family members were sometimes accurately represented, sometimes overlooked. And the same individuals could see their nationality changed arbitrarily from one census to the next.²⁸

Civil documents

Census operations were fleeting interactions. Nobody in the cités ever had any reason to actually see how they were ultimately identified in census registers. The fulfilment of civil obligations was different in that regard: residents would read, or be read aloud, official documents and deeds before signing them. The example of birth declarations is indicative of the subtle distinctions that could distinguish residents from each other, based on their real or perceived nationality. In principle, before 1922, the parents’ national origin was not a required mention on such declarations.²⁹ In practice though, when births were declared by the inhabitants of the cités, fathers bearing Italian and Spanish-sounding names were almost systematically asked for their place and country of birth, while those with Flemish or German-sounding surnames were rarely subject to the question. As a result, that process by which external nationality ascriptions were put down in writing enacted a citizen/non-citizen dichotomy that did not strictly follow national lines.³⁰

Feliciano and Encarnación Sedano, in SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census, 100 Av. de Paris and FNA, BB/11/12897, 3823 x 30.

²⁷ SDMA, 1F21, 1896 Census, 102 Av. de Paris, Landry family.

²⁸ For instance, at No. 96, the eldest son of Emmanuel and Marie Scopelidis was French, as he was born in France to a French-born mother: he was marked as such in 1921, but as a Greek five years later (see AD93, D2M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 census, 96 av. Wilson; AD93, D2M8 91, Saint-Denis census, 1926, 96 av. Wilson).

²⁹ All births had to be declared within three days (Civil code of 1804, Art. 55 et 56). Most people were aware of this, but newly arrived foreigners could let the delay pass. This was the case of a family at No. 96, whose Spanish father declared his failing to do so due to the fact that he was sick at the time and did not know how to speak French (APP, CB 92.18, 1921/1173, 15.12.1921-21.12.1921).

³⁰ The requirement was inserted at Art. 34 of the civil code by an Act of 28.10.1922. Before the passage of the law, 68% (47 out of 69) declarations of birth of children of Italian-born residents bear the mention of the father’s place of birth; 44.4% in the case of Spanish-born residents (40 out of 90); 25% for Belgians (3 out of 12); none for Germans and Alsatians and Lorrainers. Compare e.g. SDMA, E305 Saint-Denis, births, 1899, vol. 2, No. 990, 15.08.1899, Marie Verrecchia and SDMA, E302 Saint-

The transcription and gallicisation of names is another example of a contingent practice, in which a certain conception of the nation structured the interactions between residents and officials.³¹ It is hard to know, from public documents only, how residents themselves wanted them or their children to be officially called, since different states competed for a national appropriation, so to speak, of the names' spelling. Saint-Denis officials and priests from the Spanish mission, for instance, were rarely in agreement in that regard, and both usually stuck to their national form when transcribing people's names.³² And yet residents themselves seem to have deliberately switched between several versions of their forenames, if not of their surnames.³³

But states required permanent and familiar-sounding spellings. The official documents carried by residents could prevent them from seeing the vernacular version of their names prevail over official ones. For instance, two families of residents who consistently called themselves "Carboni" and "Gabielli" had to live with other concurrent spellings of their names: "Gabriele" and "Carbone" for the Italian state, "Gabriel" or "Carbonne" for French institutions.³⁴ Such competing versions (which

Denis, births, 1899, vol. 1, No. 793, 3.07.1899, Victor Van den Eynde. Victor's father, Laurent Joseph Van den Eynde, from Antwerp, was asked about his origin only once out of five births he declared while living in the cités.

³¹ Bruno Bertherat, "Liberté, égalité, identité: l'identification républicaine en question," in Marion Fontaine, Frédéric Monier, Christophe Prochasson (eds.), *Une contre-histoire de la III^e République*, Paris: La Découverte, 2013, 298-311.

³² A child born at No. 100 in 1923 was called "Anne" on the birth register and "Benita Ana" on the register at the Patronato. See AD93, 1E66/288, Saint-Denis, births, 1923, No. 1035, 26.07.1923; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 26/5, Real Patronato español de Santa Teresa de Jesús, baptisms, 1923, No. 47, 10.08.1923.

³³ Int. Van Kerkhove (No. 54), 14.09.2016. The mother of Mme Van Kerkhove née Carnevale is remembered to have introduced herself indifferently as Francesca and Françoise.

³⁴ See APP, CB 92.1, 1905/113, 2.02.1905 (Carboni); APP, CB 92.5, 1909/1045, 19.11.1909 (Gabielli), CB 92.12, 1916/384, 1-6.05.1916 (Carboni), APP, CB 92.14, 1917/639, 19.06.1917-3.07.1917 (Gabielli), APP, CB 92.17, 1920/635, 8.06.1920-28.07.1920 (Gabielli); FNA, BB/11/10387 33613 x 27, Paul Carbone; BB/11/13261, 22005 x 30, Antonio Carbone; BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27, Dominique Carbone; BB/11/12583, 33988 x 29, Libéral Gabriele; BB/11/7863, 10084 x 22, Luigi Gabriele; SDMA, 1F27, 96-100 Av. de Paris; Int. Piacitelli (No. 49), 6.07.2016. In nineteenth-century Italy, surnames were still commonly varying between a singular form and a plural one, the second option being preferred to designate the entire family, but names started being cristallised in one form or the other at the turn of the century, leaving families with vernacular surnames that did not match their

incidentally caused unwanted spelling mutations between members of the same families³⁵) were as much the symbol of the constant need of states to identify and nationalise people once and for all, as the evidence of the residents' persistence. They kept self-identifying with idiosyncratic and malleable labels, which were only partly influenced by public institutions.

Registration

In principle, registration requirements imposed on foreigners established clear differences between French and non-French residents. From 1888 to 1893, French nationality law and the rules concerning the sojourn in France of foreign citizens were significantly modified.³⁶ The resulting extension of *jus soli* was essentially the product of politicised resentment of the exemption of long-settled foreigners from military service.³⁷ As for the increased control of foreigners, it was mostly spurred by a need to protect the nation against the “*indésirables*.”³⁸ Foreigners who came to France for work had to declare their residency to the municipal authorities within a few days of

official ones. Dominique Carbone probably intended to reclaim some of his agency on that score when he gave one of his sons the first names “Vincent Carboni Antoine” (see FNA, BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27).

³⁵ Some of the Pirollis were called Pirollo; residents of another family were officially identified as Isz, Iss and Isse; others as Barona and Varona. These variations, common in their regions of origin in the 19th century, could end up causing legal problems in the context of naturalisations or successions.

³⁶ The most important pieces of legislation were the decree of 2.10.1888 on the regulation of foreigners (translated and commented in Thomas Barclays, *Nationality, Domicile and Residence in France: Decree of October 2, 1888 Concerning Foreigners*, London: Maxwell and Son, 1888); the law of 26.06.1889 on nationality; the law of 8.08.1893 on the sojourn of foreigners in France and the protection of national labour. Conditioning the right to work on the declaration, the 1893 law was passed after complaints that foreigners had no incentive to comply to the decree of 1888. For a clear contemporary analysis, see Augustin de Taillandier, *Manuel-formulaire de la naturalisation et des obligations des étrangers en France. Commentaire de la loi du 26 juin 1889 sur la nationalité et du décret du 2 octobre 1888 sur la police des étrangers, à l'usage des Juges de Paix et des Maires, des Bureaux de Préfecture et de Sous-Préfecture et des Étrangers*, Paris: Thorin, Montbéliard: Journal des Maires, 1890.

³⁷ Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Cambridge (MA), London: Harvard University Press, 1992, 85. See also, Patrick Weil, *Qu'est-ce qu'un Français ?*, Paris: Grasset, 2002; Cécile Mondonico, “La loi du 26 juin 1889 sur la nationalité,” master's thesis in history, University of Paris I, 1990.

³⁸ Gérard Noiriel, *La Tyrannie du national*, *op. cit.*, 170–4.

their arrival, justifying their identity and nationality. This created a specific moment in which the residents' names and legal citizenship became crystallised, without regard for their self-identifications. All the more so, since the papers they produced to prove their identity could bear erroneous mentions as well. Born near Milan in 1859, Louis Sonna had become a subject of Piedmont when he was two months old, and later an Italian subject, but was still listed as an Austrian national. His *livret d'ouvrier* issued a decade earlier was probably the source of the discrepancy.³⁹

32/16

République Française
VILLE DE SAINT-DENIS

En exécution du décret du 2 Octobre 1888

En présence du Maire, s'est présenté le sieur *Sonna Louis*
 Fils de *Barthélemy*
 et de *Placide Goda*
 Né à *Comassino (Austria)* le *7 7 1859*
 Nationalité *Austro-Hongroise*
 Dernier domicile : *Comassino*
 Profession : *Journalier chez Martin Lamselle*
 Marié à :
 Enfants : *Celibataire*

Pièces justificatives : *Livret d'ouvrier Paris 21 Mai 1878*
Compass. 9 Mai 1878

Lequel nous a déclaré *Sonna Louis* sa résidence
 à Saint-Denis, *Avenue de Paris* N° *100* département
 de la Seine.

Fait à Saint-Denis, le *14 8* 1888

Signature du déclarant : *Sonna Louis*

Le Maire, *[Signature]*

Figure 2: The declaration of residency of Louis Sonna, 100 Av. de Paris,
as required by the decree of 2.10.1888

³⁹ On the cumulative effect of identification papers at the turn of the century, and the room for errors and deceptions it entailed, see Pierre Piazza, *Histoire de la carte nationale d'identité*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2004, 125–6.

From 1893, the declaration of residency had to be done at the police headquarters in Paris, instead of Saint-Denis city hall. Foreigners were then issued with a certificate, called *feuille d'immatriculation**, which conditioned their right to work and which they were supposed to produce whenever required.⁴⁰ The goal of these measures was to put foreigners, for the first time, “under surveillance.”⁴¹ And yet the social reality was more complex, and did not change overnight. Most residents failed to register, and the police did not really care.⁴² The only inhabitants of the cités who eventually had to pay the fine were those simultaneously convicted of other, more serious offences.⁴³

By the time they requested their naturalisation, residents who could prove they had made the declaration prescribed by the 1893 law were a minority. Some claimed to have lost their *feuille d'immatriculation**, others confessed having never had one, and most remained silent about it.⁴⁴ Among those who did show a certificate at the time of their naturalisation, only 13% of them had made the declaration within the first year of their presence in France. For those who had failed to comply in the early days as the law required, the average waiting period was above 13 years.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Failing to do so exposed to a penalty of 50 to 200 francs –and employers were liable as well.

⁴¹ “L’accession à la nationalité : le grand débat (1882-1932),” in Dominique Colas, Claude Emeri, Jacques Zylberberg (eds.), *Citoyenneté et nationalité: perspectives en France et au Québec*, Paris: P.U.F., 1991, 144.

⁴² See Gérard Noiriel, *The French Melting-Pot... op. cit.*, 66–8. From 1894 to 1900, no more than 20 foreigners were sentenced every year in the Seine for violating the 1893 law (FNA, F7/12601, “Seine”). The police in Paris surmised in 1907 that about 70% of foreigners were simply not aware of their obligations with regard to registration. See Clifford Rosenberg, *Policing Paris: The Origins of Modern Immigration Control between the Wars*, Ithaca (NY), London: Cornell University Press, 2006, 47.

⁴³ AVP, D1U6 1040, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, Procureur de la République c. Paul Colabono, 100 av. de Paris, Saint-Denis, 6.07.1909.

⁴⁴ As opposed to the criminal record, the police seems to have had no way of checking a person’s name against the “registre d’immatriculation,” which was chronological and not indexed alphabetically.

⁴⁵ Based on 45 cases of inhabitants of the cités for whom we know both the date of entry in France and that of their declaration of residency, essentially from their naturalisation files. Extremely rare (less than 2%) were those who had filed the declaration more than once, even though a new declaration was required for each town in which the foreigner migrated for work.

It is true that most just did not know, or care, about the requirements. Others were all but certain that the law did not apply to them, like Alsatians and Lorrainers who had yet to recover their nationality, and French-born women who had lost their citizenship by virtue of their marriage.⁴⁶ Unsurprisingly, people engaging in child-importation schemes were much quicker to satisfy the requirement, which reflected once more their administrative savvy, and their propensity to avoid any unwanted attention from public authorities.⁴⁷

REGISTRE N° 127
Feuille d'immatriculation
1re DIVISION
4e BUREAU

REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
LIBERTÉ — ÉGALITÉ — FRATERNITÉ
PRÉFECTURE DE POLICE

EXTRAIT DU REGISTRE D'IMMATRICULATION
(Approuvé de la loi du 8 août 1893.)

En exécution de la loi du 8 août 1893,
Monsieur le Préfet de Police, s'est présenté
le sieur *Tomás Rabanedo*
Né le *10 Mars 1894*
Nationalité *Espagnole*
Fils de *Miguel Rabanedo*
et de *María Serrano*
Marié à *María Serrano*
Veuf de *María Serrano*
Enfants :

Domicile *10 Rue de la Vierge*
lequel nous a déclaré être arrivé à Paris le *5 Mars 1916*
pour y exercer la profession de *journalier*
Il a justifié de son identité conformément aux dispositions de l'article
de la loi, en produisant à l'appui de sa déclaration *rapport de l'inspecteur*

Fait à Paris, le *7 Mars 1916*

Signature du déclarant
Tomás Rabanedo

POUR LE PRÉFET DE POLICE
Le Chef du 4e Bureau
[Signature]

NOTA. — En cas de changement de domicile, à Paris ou dans le département de la Seine, faire viser ce Certificat
à la Préfecture de Police dans le délai de deux jours.
Si l'étranger quitte le département de la Seine, il doit présenter la Préfecture de Police et faire viser
ce Certificat dans le délai de deux jours, à la Mairie de sa nouvelle résidence.

Figure 3: “Feuille d’immatriculation”* of Tomás Rabanedo, 7.03.1916

⁴⁶ Some Alsatian residents did comply with the law, like Charles Messmer (FNA, BB/11/3743, 6860 x 97); others did not, like Émilie Schwartz née Mohr (FNA, BB/11/3735, 6006 x 99). For an example of French-born resident married (before 1927) to a foreigner who did not fulfill the obligation, see FNA, BB/11/8198, 15099 x 23, Marie-Thérèse Pirolli née Billères.

⁴⁷ The padrone Joseph Carlesimo declared his residency only a few weeks after his arrival in 1894 (FNA, BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Joseph Carlesimo). Giacinto Pirolli, who was about to send his underage child Giustino to work at the glass factory (see above, chapter 2), also made the declaration promptly upon arrival (APP, CB 92.3, 1907/1310, 23-6.11.1907).

Increased controls

Compliance with the 1893 law rose during the Great War, as the French authorities devised a system designed to enforce it seriously, by controlling mobility.⁴⁸ While a new residency permit, created in August 1914, was essentially meant to sort enemy aliens from others, the purpose of the decree of April 21, 1917 on the identity card was to clearly identify foreigners as such, and restrict their movements accordingly.⁴⁹

These new rules had a noticeable effect on some residents of the cités. Convinced that they were facing immediate deportation in 1914, almost all stood in line at the Plaine police station and applied for the residency permit. The identity card requirement from 1917 was slower to percolate, and demanded a greater effort. Obtaining a proof of residency from one's landlord; authenticating that document at the police station; obtaining five official photographs; queuing –in person only– at the Préfecture de police in central Paris, not once, but twice; and lastly paying 5 francs of fees: none of this was particularly easy for working-class families.⁵⁰

For those who did apply for the identity card, it often provided them with the first opportunity to also register under the 1893 law.⁵¹ But once again, nationality was a clearer category on paper than in the social world, and some residents were unsure as to whether they were concerned or not. Born in France, but technically Italian, Louis Fallone thought the requirement did not apply to him. Foreign-born teenagers thought

⁴⁸ The employers were required to make sure their workers respected the 1893 law, by handing his residency permit to the police in exchange for a certificate, and he had to retrieve the permit along with a visa if he wanted to move out of town. See Bertrand Nogaro, "L'introduction de la main-d'œuvre étrangère pendant la guerre," *Revue d'économie politique*, 1920, 728–9.

⁴⁹ Now the foreigners' card was kept at the police station and they carried a *récépissé* (certificate). If they wanted to change towns, they would return it to the police in exchange for their card. The *récépissé* was then sent to the police in the town they intended to reach, so that they could be looked for and arrested if they failed to arrive.

⁵⁰ For a good description of the practical steps to be taken by foreigners in order to obtain their identity cards, see *Guide to The Formalities for Foreigners in France. English and American Edition*, Orléans: P. Pigelet et fils, 1920, 7.

⁵¹ FNA, BB/11/10314, 29478 x 27, Antoine Fraioli.

erroneously that identity cards were only for adults.⁵² Others, who had fought in the French Army, thought their service had automatically made them French.⁵³ In the 1920s, the hassle –and additional expense– caused by the obligation to renew one’s identity card every three years would have made sure to remind foreigners of their conditional belonging to French society. And yet police records suggest that a majority of residents of foreign origin did not get their identity card, failed to renew it, or did not request the mandatory visa when changing towns.⁵⁴ This indicates that their foreign status and what obligations it entailed were not a major concern in their daily life. And yet wittingly or not, the administrative pressure slowly increased, and translated into actual social differences. From the mid-1920s, the request and renewal of the identity card became harder to escape, as the right to work in factories was increasingly tied to the possession of the card.⁵⁵

Passports, visas and certificates

From the mid-19th century until the First World War, the French authorities did not require a particular document from foreigners entering the French territory.⁵⁶ Immigrants did, however, carry passports, which emigration countries had made

⁵² APP, CB 92.23,1926/1702, 3.11.1926.

⁵³ FNA, BB/11/6155, 17652 x 14, Manuel Angel Gómez, “*se croyant français par suite d’un engagement volontaire pendant la campagne de 1914-1918 et étant pensionné de guerre à 100%.*”

⁵⁴ APP, CB 92.15, 1918/339, 4.4.1918; 1918/395, 11.04.1918; 1918/400-1, 12.04.1918; CB 92.20,1924/544, 27.04.1924; CB 92.21, 1924/1190, 24.09.1924; 1924/1589, 23.12.1924; CB 92.22,1925/1230-2, 10-11.08.1925; CB 92.23,1926/1638, 21-23.10.1926; 1926/1698, 3.11.1926; 1926/1703, 3.11.1926.

⁵⁵ From 1924, the right to work was conditional on having a visa on the card from the Ministry of Labour, after a recommendation from the Office régional de la Main d’Œuvre étrangère (Gérard Noiriél, *Réfugiés et sans-papiers. La République face au droit d’asile, XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 2006, 184).

⁵⁶ Maurice d’Hartoy, *Histoire du Passeport français, depuis l’antiquité jusqu’à nos jours*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1937. During the war, the documents required by the French authorities were mostly work contracts and visas (see e.g. AGA, 54/6.072, Note from the Director of Sûreté générale at the French Ministry of the Interior to the Spanish ambassador Quiñones De León, 21.04.1917). Requirements could converge: in Spain, from 1917, the passport was only issued by the authorities upon presentation of the French work contract.

mandatory.⁵⁷ In Italy, two passports coexisted, one for internal movements, another for international emigration.⁵⁸



Figure 4: Internal passport of Francesco Gallaccio, present at No. 100 in 1901, issued by the Mayor of Viticuso and Acquafondata on 9.11.1900

In Spain, both an emigration permit and a passport were necessary to travel abroad in the 1900s.⁵⁹ With the complicity of local officials, migrants could alter the elements of identification of those documents, by making false declarations about their craft and

⁵⁷ See e.g. AS Caserta, Busta 23, f.229, “Elenchi degli emigranti nel quinquennio 1905-1909 dei comuni del collegio di Sora,” 16.05.1910; AHP Cáceres, GC/2458:1, “Registro salvoconductos, pasaportes (1924-1943).”

⁵⁸ Italian law on emigration of 31.01.1901, Art. 5. An internal passport had been in use in France as well during the 19th century, but had become obsolete by the 1880s (see Pierre Piazza, *op. cit.*, 32–9).

⁵⁹ Hernanz Germán Rueda, “Emigración,” in Javier Fernández Sebastián, Juan Francisco Fuentes (eds.), *Diccionario político y social del siglo XX español*, Madrid: Alianza editorial, 2008, 460-9.

age, in order to avoid emigration restrictions. They could also pass as others, to elude the police in the context of expulsion procedures.⁶⁰ In other instances, they would simply doctor the dates, names and signatures by scraping the papers and inserting new mentions.⁶¹

On the other hand, for the vast majority of residents, the documents they had with them correctly identified them as nationals of their State. The effect of these paper identifications was reinforced by interactions between residents and their national authorities in Paris, some of which were made mandatory by French law. For instance, Italian and Spanish fathers from the cités who wanted their children to work in factories were compelled to go to their respective consulates in Paris to have a visa stamped on their children's birth certificates.⁶² This was a condition for their children's *livrets** to be issued at Saint-Denis city hall by obliging employees.⁶³

Once it had become clear that the Italian manpower was being recruited to eschew the legal provisions against child labour, the French government had tightened the rules and required the authentication of birth certificates by diplomatic missions.⁶⁴ But

⁶⁰ A resident at No. 102, François Pereda, had been sentenced in 1915 to several months in prison, but under a false name and then ordered to leave France. He failed to do so, and was eventually arrested carrying a work certificate under yet a third identity (APP, CB 92.11, 1915/564, 18.08.1915; CB 92.18, 1922/709, 24.08.1922). For a legal analysis of expulsion law at the turn of the century, see Alexis Martini, *L'Expulsion des étrangers: étude de droit comparé*, Paris: Larose et Tenin, 1909.

⁶¹ APP, CB 92.22, 1925/1868, 29.12.1925; CB 92.26, 1928/1473, 1.10.1928.

⁶² FNA, BB/18/6107, N. 23, banal 1901, "Cacciarella (Clemente) 100 avenue de la plaine, à Saint-Denis"; FNA, F/22/452, Report from M. Lavoisier, labour inspector, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 29.03.1915.

⁶³ Around 1900, one of the municipal officials was suspiciously uninquisitive when it came to booklet requests for Italian children, and failed to require the consulate's visas. He eventually got away with a claim of ignorance of the law (FNA, F/22/452, Inspecteur divisionnaire Laporte, Courrier au ministre du commerce et de l'industrie, Paris, 26.07.1901; Audition of François Berthelon, head of the military bureau, 9.09.1901, in AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, dossier d'instruction n° 49750, *doc. cit.*). Years later, another Saint-Denis employee was accused of taking bribes to sign off on knowingly false work contracts sold to would-be Spanish immigrants (Audition of Gaston Geerssen, 14.12.1917, in AVP, D2U6 198, Procureur de la République c. César Remigio Iglesias, José Gonzalez, José Jésus Hocès de la Guardia, 10.01.1918).

⁶⁴ Through a circular order by the Minister of Commerce on 20.04.1899, reaffirmed on 15.11.1909. (see FNA, 23 BL 164, "Enquête à l'usine Legras...", *doc. cit.*)

this had barely solved the problem. Embassies and consulates were now the places where officials would be fooled –if not bribed⁶⁵– by fathers and *padroni* into confirming that documents matched the child’s actual identity.



Figure 5: The livret* of Cosmo Antonio Gallaccio, from No. 100 Av. de Paris, based on a fake date of birth⁶⁶

It seems that most inhabitants had an instrumental relationship to their national institutions, and did not necessarily welcome their intervention. When a military officer spurred on good intentions came to the rescue of children in the cités in 1901, he saw fellow Italians who were victims of an egregious exploitation. But his cold reception from the part of the residents suggests that for their part, they saw someone whose language, manners and misplaced desire to prevent their children from working

⁶⁵ The complicity of the diplomatic service in going around the law is unclear, and a few recorded episodes are contradictory. In 1901, an Italian father from No. 100 was duly denounced to the French authorities for coming to the consulate and trying to get a visa on a fake birth certificate. And while few years later the Spanish consulate could have been fooled into certifying the fake papers of one child from No. 100, it is more troubling that two years later, it backed the *padrón*'s request of a booklet for the same boy, most certainly intended for another child. See FNA, BB/18/6107, N. 23, banal 1901, "Cacciarella....," *doc. cit.*; F/22/452, Report from M. Lavoisier, *doc. cit.*.

⁶⁶ Cosmo Antonio's real date of birth was 18.04.1888. See ASC Acquafondata, Registro della Popolazione, 1911, Borgata Quadro di Casalcassinese, casa 15.

set him apart from them.⁶⁷ In fact, the experience of national institutions varied from one family to the next. Italian *padroni* and later their Spanish counterparts, for instance, developed direct relations with both the French authorities and those of their country of origin. Their double proficiency in French and in the standard language of their home country was surely both a factor and a result of these constant interactions.⁶⁸ This was also the case of well-connected characters like Cesar Iglesias, from No. 96, who also spoke fluent French and acted an intermediary for his countrymen both with the Spanish consulate and the French authorities.⁶⁹

Another procedure involving mandatory interactions at the consulates was related to marriages. We have said that residents, to be able to marry, had to ask their parents for their consent, and do so by mail if the parents were not in the Plaine with them.⁷⁰ But Italian, Spanish, German and Swiss nationals over the age of majority were not compelled to produce the birth (or death) certificates of their parents nor their consent. They could simply declare their parents' identity and produce a *certificat de coutume**, issued by their respective diplomatic missions, stating that their parents' civil documents were not legally required in order to marry in their home countries.⁷¹ It seems that most Italian and Spanish inhabitants of the cités opted for that procedure

⁶⁷ Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia," *art. cit.*, 471: "*La Pirolli, vera arpia ributtante d'aspetto e di modi, ci accolse con invettive e con insulti così triviali e violenti che dovemmo rinunciare ad entrare nella sua abitazione.*" ("Ms. Pirolli, a true harpy of unpleasant looks and manners, welcomed us with such trivial and violent abuse and insults, that we had to give up going into her dwelling.")

⁶⁸ In the Spring of 1898, Voza could serve as an interpreter at the police station (see chapter 3, p. 283). Years later the wife of Pedro Herrero, one of the padrones who had moved from Levallois to No. 100 Av. de Paris, would provide the same services (*JSD*, 7.04.1898; APP, CB 82.14, 1915/552, 23.08.1915).

⁶⁹ See chapter 2, note 200. In AVP, D2U6 198, *doc. cit.*, see in particular the card in "scellés No. 2" on which a Spanish engineer certifies that Iglesias had obtained the "*cédula personal*" and the "*papiers d'étranger*" on his behalf.

⁷⁰ See chapter 2.

⁷¹ See on this point Maurice Garden, "Mariages parisiens à la fin du XIX^e siècle : une micro-analyse quantitative," *Annales de démographie historique*, Vol. 95 (1998), No. 1, 112.

for the sake of convenience.⁷² In practice, this meant that these foreign residents had to visit their embassy or consulate in Paris to obtain the document.⁷³ And that interaction with state authorities further cemented their self-identification as Italian and Spanish nationals.

Welfare and citizenship

The relevance of nationality could also result from its intersection with welfare policies, which could divide the social fabric into different tiers of membership.⁷⁴ To begin with, most health care and social insurance laws of the late 19th century reserved benefits to French nationals.⁷⁵ In practice though, national distinctions were unevenly enforced. In hospitals, foreign residents and French people were equally admitted to surgery hours and emergency rooms.⁷⁶ An Italian man who had lived in the cités in the

⁷² Many marriage acts of Italian and Spanish residents bear the mention of the certificate. Only a few of those whose parents were not in Saint-Denis did produce an actual consent: see e.g. AD93, 1E66/312, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1906, Vol. 1, No. 440, 25.08.1906.

⁷³ Note that residents could also have to turn to their national authorities to obtain their own identification documents if they had lost them. Local archives still bear mentions of requests for birth certificates, for instance, made for marriage purposes in Saint-Denis by residents (see e.g. ASC Pontecorvo, 1900, births, No. 353, 11.11.1900, Maria Civita Caporusio).

⁷⁴ For a reflection on the “social citizenship” (understood as participation in the welfare state) and its interplay with the social dimension of citizenship, see e.g. Engin F. Isin, *Recasting the Social in Citizenship*, Toronto, Buffalo (NY), London: University of Toronto Press, 2008.

⁷⁵ Foreigners were excluded from the *conseils de prud’hommes* (law of 1.06.1853) and the leadership and management of unions (law of 21.03.1884, art. 4). Only societies made of French people could tender for public contracts (4.06.1888, 29.07.1893). Foreigners were barred from boards of mutual benefit societies, unless members were all foreign (law of 1.04.1898) and from labour councils (decrees of 17.09.1900 and 2.01.1901). The assistance to the elderly and incurables was reserved to French citizens (14.07.1905), while the law on free medical assistance 15.07.1893 conditioned the foreigner’s eligibility upon diplomatic reciprocity. As for the law of 9.04.1898 on work accidents, it made in principle no distinctions between nationals and foreigners, except by preventing foreigners to keep receiving their annuity if they left France, and by denying their relatives the right to perceive any funds if themselves had not been living in France at the time of the accident. See Joseph Lugand, *L’Immigration des ouvriers étrangers en France et les enseignements de la guerre*, Paris: Martinet, 1919, 12–7; Maurice Widiez, *Les Étrangers dans les lois sur les accidents du travail et les retraites ouvrières*, Paris: A. Rousseau, 1913, 14–24.

⁷⁶ SDMA, CT812, “Registre des entrées d’urgence dans les hôpitaux de Paris,” 1892–1893; SDMA, 1 I 227, Préfecture de police, bureau d’hygiène, “État des entrées dans les hôpitaux des malades atteintes d’affections transmissibles,” 25.10.1915. On this point, see the accommodating stance of the French Minister of the Interior in Ministère des affaires étrangères, *Conférence internationale d’assistance aux étrangers: procès-verbaux des séances, documents annexes. Suite des réponses au questionnaire du*

early 1910s, was admitted and treated for free for a full year at Saint-Denis hospital, regardless of his foreign nationality.⁷⁷ Furthermore, it is possible that Catholic nuns were allowed into the hospital to comfort him, even though that was forbidden for French nationals.⁷⁸

In Saint-Denis, as far as municipal welfare policies were concerned, nationality was not relevant in all circumstances. In principle, being a foreign citizen barred locals from receiving handouts (in food, coal, shoes or cash), orthopedic prostheses, and unemployment benefits from the municipal *Bureau de Bienfaisance*.⁷⁹ But in reality, what mattered was the family's belonging to the community, and a case-by-case assessment of each situation. Maria Pirolli's brother, an Italian who had been in the Plaine for 15 years, received help to buy a prosthesis for his wife. Carlo Gabriele, a resident at No. 96 whom the Bureau's committee clearly identified as an "Italian subject," obtained financial help to cover the cost of an orthopedic device needed by his son; Carlo's brother Francesco, who lived at No. 100, received the same help for his daughter.⁸⁰ Both of those families had been in the Plaine for about 10 years, and were far from being strangers; their foreign status appeared quite theoretical, and inconsistent with their integration into the Plaine's social fabric. Also, they probably had some degree of familiarity with individual members of the committee.⁸¹

During the First World War, food coupons were obtained in the cités without real trouble by Frenchmen and foreigners alike, in spite of the requirement, for the latter,

Gouvernement français, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1913, 40. In principle, Spaniards were only granted the right to be admitted in French hospitals with the bilateral treaty of 2.11.1932, but sources show they were commonly accepted before that date.

⁷⁷ SDMA, 1Q14, 20.03.1930.

⁷⁸ ASD, Ambasciata italiana a Parigi, Fasc. 3, "Consolato e agenzie consolari," "Lione, 1912," Letter from the Italian Consul in Lyon to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome, 20.08.1912 (copy).

⁷⁹ Nissim Samama, *op. cit.*, 117 (the decree requiring French nationality for annual and temporary benefits in Paris was issued on 15.11.1895). See for the principles re-affirmed in the Saint-Denis context, SDMA, 1Q5, 29.11.1907 (prosthesis); 15.01.1908 et 28.01.1908, 15.02.1908 (unemployment benefits).

⁸⁰ SDMA, 1Q7, 26.11.1913; 1Q8, 27.02.1915, 24.04.1915; 28.08.1915.

⁸¹ See chapter 3.

to present their identity cards. Many could not do so, but this did not prove a real obstacle.⁸² Cracks in that policy of nationality-blind generosity started appearing after the Great War, in the wake of the brief but intense wave of unemployment of 1919. First, the amount of financial support requested by families from the *Bureau de bienfaisance** became a factor: when it was too high, it could cause the Bureau to bring up the nationality criterion, and deny foreigners the help they asked for.⁸³ In 1921, two weeks after the communists temporarily lost their grip on city hall, the Bureau went further: it decided to provide benefits only to foreigners who could justify of six months of residency in Saint-Denis, as was already required for the unemployed.⁸⁴ But the restrictive turn transcended political divides. In 1926, under a communist majority, the level of periodic handouts to needy foreigners was lowered –officially for budgetary considerations–, introducing a very tangible difference of status between poor families, based on their nationality.⁸⁵

The Great Depression further diminished, in practice, the benefits distributed to non-nationals. In addition, the increasingly complex regulations governing registration requirements and identity cards provided French authorities with a way to limit welfare services to foreigners, who were now in principle entitled to them by virtue of international treaties.⁸⁶ This was felt as particularly unfair for Spaniards of Saint-Denis, since a reciprocity treaty had finally been signed between France and Spain in

⁸² *Guide to the Formalities for Foreigners in France*, *op. cit.*, 9. In practice, foreign inhabitants of the cités would just obtain the bread card from the municipality by claiming they had lost their identity card. See the example of seven Spaniards living at No. 96, APP, CB 92.15,1918/1208-1213, 1.11.1918; APP, CB 92.15,1919/26, 9.01.1919. See also SDMA, CT807, “Sucre, perte tickets, 1918.”

⁸³ As an Italian amputee came back from the front in 1917 and asked for a 450 fr. prosthesis, the Bureau required him to first ask the Italian embassy and the *Società italiana di beneficenza* (see below), with the possibility of funding part of the price if he failed to secure all the necessary funds. When he came back empty however, the Bureau maintained its refusal (SDMA, 1Q10, 27.09.1919, 29.01.1920).

⁸⁴ SDMA, 1Q11, 21.07.1921. On the loss of control by the communists from July to December 1921, see Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 946–52.

⁸⁵ SDMA, 1Q13, 25.11.1926. We know from the remarks of one councillor at that meeting that 80 Spanish and 20 Italian families, which totalled 440 children, were receiving the weekly benefits.

⁸⁶ Clifford Rosenberg, *Policing Paris*, *op. cit.*, 58.

1932.⁸⁷ The Franco-Italian agreements covered more areas, but the issues of free medical assistance and care for the elderly and the disabled were left unresolved, as were working conditions. When one state did not cater to immigrants, however, another was prompt to take its place. The loophole about the health and safety of Italians in the workplace was exploited by the Italian government to claim guardianship over its immigrant workers. During the Great War, would-be employers of Italian workers were compelled to obtain the written consent of the embassy before hiring any Italian. They also had to commit to letting Italian officials inspect the workers' living and working conditions, and intervene as mediators in case of labour conflicts.⁸⁸

Institutional intermediaries

As diverse as it was, the institutional intervention in the Plaine did not necessarily involve organs of the states. It could take more indirect forms, in particular through subsidised societies pushing a national agenda. Evidence shows that Alsatian and Lorrainer inhabitants at No. 96-102 were aware of societies, based in Paris, who could help them recover their nationality. There, they would be assisted with the paperwork, and provided with the required, officially stamped paper free of charge.⁸⁹ Also, a number of glassworkers at Legras were members of a mutual benefit society for

⁸⁷ CDEE, "El Hogar de los Españoles," 001/013, Letter from the directors of four societies of Spanish workers, including the Hogar, to the Spanish ambassador to France, October 1933.

⁸⁸ Ernest Lémonon, *L'Après-guerre...*, *op. cit.*, 46. The French government saw through this effort to keep Italian workers under the influence and control of the Italian state (see FNA, 94AP/120, Ministère de l'armement et des fabrications de guerre, Direction de la main d'oeuvre, Section 4 bis, Main-d'oeuvre étrangère, "L'introduction de la main-d'oeuvre étrangère pendant la guerre, et la politique d'immigration," 12.07.1917, 2). The main bilateral treaties on social protection were signed by France and Italy on 15.04.1904 (completed by additional covenants on 20.01.1906, 9.06.1906, 15.06.1910) and 30.09.1919.

⁸⁹ On these societies, see Alfred Wahl, *L'Option et l'émigration des Alsaciens-Lorrains (1871-1872)*, Paris, 1974, 195 sqq. See e.g. the birth certificate, translated at the Société de protection des Alsaciens-Lorrains de Paris, rue de Provence, on 10.03.1892, in FNA, BB/11/2561, 5782 x 91, Schiel Joseph et Bour Madeleine, épouse Schiel; the letter from M. and Mme Lauber, 22.08.1888, with the heading of the Cercle des Alsaciens-Lorrains, 199 rue du Temple, in FNA, BB/11/1838, 2415 x 85, Antoine Ferdinand and Julie Lauber; the documents translated by the Société de réintégration des Alsaciens-Lorrains, 2 bd de Strasbourg in FNA, BB/11/4843, 8848 x 08, Joseph Müller.

Alsations and Lorrainers.⁹⁰ These organisations, subsidised and sponsored by state and local authorities, were regional in their membership, but national in their purpose. Through their activities and their gatherings, they encouraged their members to subscribe to a full-fledged French citizenship, not only from a legal standpoint, but also from a linguistic and symbolic one. These societies acted as channels of nationalisation and francisation.

In that sense, their mission simultaneously resembled and differed from other societies with an ethno-national component, which intended to nationalise the emigrants, but detach them from the French nation. The steps taken by the Italian state to strengthen *italianità* by indirect channels have been documented elsewhere.⁹¹ In the cités, the impact of such societies was not really visible before the Great War, although it is possible that some residents already received help from some Italian organisations.

One of the most prominent was the *Società italiana di beneficenza*, founded in 1865.⁹² It handed out benefits and train tickets to Italy to those who had been in Paris for at least six months and had become unable to work due to illnesses or old age.⁹³ The Catholic Opera Bonomelli, for its part, took centre stage in denouncing the mistreatments of child workers in French glass factories, claiming credit for liberating

⁹⁰ See FNA, BB/11/3608, 4656 x 02, and BB/11/4600, 2010 x 07, Pierre Studer, a relative of Louis Isz, a resident at No. 100 in the 1880s.

⁹¹ Daniel J. Grange, *L'Italie et la Méditerranée (1896–1911). Les fondements d'une politique étrangère*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 1994, 615–702; Patricia Salvetti, *Immagine nazionale ed emigrazione nella Società Dante Alighieri*, Rome: Bonacci, 1995; Matteo Sanfilippo, “Nationalisme, ‘italianité’ ...,” *art. cit.*; Mark I. Choate, *Emigrant Nation*, *op. cit.*

⁹² The name meant “Italian benevolent society,” and was often referred to by its French translation, “Société italienne de bienfaisance.” Former residents received help from the society during and after the Great War. See for the Puzzuoli family, SDMA, CT103, Letter from the *Società italiana di Beneficenza* to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.11.1919, CT45, *idem*, 20.02.1922; the Palma family, SDMA, 4H3/131, 172, Letter from the *Società italiana di Beneficenza* to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 20.10.1917; for the Carbone family, SDMA, 4H3/137, Letter from the director of the *Società Italiana di Beneficenza* to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 3.11.1917, and reply from the Mayor, 13.11.1917.

⁹³ Nissim Samama, *op. cit.*, 130–2. The poor state of the Society’s archive makes it impossible to check in detail if Italians in the Plaine knew about it and requested its services at an early stage. The surviving records are stored in FNA, F7/15908, Société italienne de Bienfaisance, outgoing mail (mostly deteriorated), and F7/15909, Accounting registers, 1873–80.

210 children in the fall of 1901, and repatriating dozens.⁹⁴ Shortly thereafter, it planned to open youth centres near the glass factories to undercut the *padroni*'s business, but the project never materialised. In any case, the Opera's presence in the northern suburbs of Paris was not significant until the 1920s, and its relevance in the Plaine limited, at best.⁹⁵ The only recorded visit, in the cités, of one envoy from the Opera – the well-meaning military officer mentioned above – did not end well.⁹⁶

Outside of these major organisations, it is difficult to retrieve information about the Italian societies that might have been active in the Plaine. Regarding the one created by Louis Pirolli and his relatives after the Great War, we have no way to know the extent of the support it received from Italian authorities, nor whether it had a strong national overtone.⁹⁷ In addition, its popularity with Casertan and Molisan families is far from certain. By contrast, we do know that in the interwar period, families of residents from Southern Italy started joining the well-established, non-ethnic mutual benefit societies of the Plaine.⁹⁸ Financial solidity may have been a major reason for preferring these institutions over more recent ones like Louis's. But we cannot dismiss

⁹⁴ The Opera commissioned investigations in the Sora-Isernia area (Ugo Cafiero, *op. cit.*) and in glass factories of Paris, Lyon and Marseilles (Schiapparelli, Gallarati Scotti, Sommi Picenardi) which had a significant impact, but its later involvement in France remained limited, and it had no permanent antenna in the Paris area. See Archivio del Centro Studi Emigrazione (Rome), Carlo Bellò, *La fondazione dell' "Opera di assistenza degli operai emigrati in Europa e nel Levante" (1900)*, 17 (reproduced from the *Bollettino dell'archivio per la storia del movimento sociale cattolico in Italia*, Vol. 1, 1966).

⁹⁵ Luigi Taravella, "La pratique religieuse comme facteur d'intégration," in Pierre Milza, Antonio Bechelloni, Michel Dreyfus (eds.), *L'Intégration italienne en France: un siècle de présence italienne dans trois régions françaises: 1880-1980*, Brussels: Complexe, 1995, 71–83. On the project of *patronages* for the young glass workers, see Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, *art. cit.*, 481–2. On the role of the Opera's secretariats in the early 1900s, see A. Dosio, T. Vercelli, "L'Émigration italienne en Europe. Sa protection, son organisation par l'Asistance des ouvriers italiens émigrés," in *L'Action populaire. Publication tri-mensuelle*, No. 70 (1905), 7–28.

⁹⁶ Galeazzo Sommi-Picenardi, "La tratta dei piccoli italiani in Francia," *art. cit.*, 471.

⁹⁷ See chapter 2. We could not find any records pertaining to the society either at the AVP or at the AD93.

⁹⁸ See figure 6, and the Pirollis and Zonfrillis in SDMA, 5Q61, Société de secours "la Mutualité" de la Plaine Saint-Denis. Families of foreign glass workers were also probably members of the mutual society at Legras, although we could not find records of membership.

the hypothesis that those residents were not particularly attracted to the national rhetoric.



Figure 6: Jean Verrecchia's membership card of the *Fédération mutualiste de la Seine* (member since 1.07.1930)

State-sponsored efforts to tend to Spaniards, by contrast, were more successful in the Plaine. After isolated initiatives in the 1890s, the first years of the century saw repeated calls to organise and help the Spanish colony in Paris, but they remained largely unanswered.⁹⁹ In the wake of the scandal caused by the *padrones* in late 1912, a priest associated with the Royal Palace in Madrid came to spend several months in Paris in 1913. With the support of the Spanish and Latin-American high society in Paris, he spearheaded the efforts to rescue and evangelise the Spanish workers the

⁹⁹ See *La Correspondencia de España*, 9.06.1901, and the reference to the letter by Luis Bonafoux to the Count of Romanones in 1906 in *El Motín*, “¿Se puede?,” 12.12.1912. As early as 1890, a Spanish priest had travelled to Levallois to establish a camp for Spanish beggars (see Eusebio Blasco, “Españoles sueltos,” *Alrededor del Mundo*, 29.09.1899).

Plaine-Saint-Denis.¹⁰⁰ As a result, the afore-mentioned Spanish mission was founded on rue de la Pompe, in the 16th arrondissement, in 1916. In addition, Spanish nuns who had been running a shelter and health centre in Neuilly since 1893, started coming to the parish church of the Plaine-Saint-Denis on Sundays, in order to teach the catechism in Spanish.¹⁰¹

But it is not until 1926 that a significant Spanish society was founded in the Plaine, under the auspices of the embassy. Called “*Hogar*” (*home*), its tacit objective consisted in influencing migrants from a national and religious perspective, at a time when they were thought to assimilate rapidly to France, and what was worse, to radical ideas.¹⁰² A few residents of the cités became members of the Hogar, while others, who were not actual members, could nonetheless be seen at one-off events.¹⁰³ On the other hand, it is probable that the majority of Spaniards in the cités stayed away, at least in early years.

The Hogar was run on the premises of the Spanish Patronato, made up of a chapel, a presbytery and an auditorium opened in 1923. An off-shoot of the Spanish mission in Paris, the Patronato offered, in addition to religious functions, material and administrative services, sports activities, and other entertainments such as theatrical shows and film projections. A resident at No. 96 whose son had been killed in a road

¹⁰⁰ Ana Fernández Asperilla, “Los emigrantes españoles en París a finales del siglo XIX y en el primer tercio del siglo XX. La sociedad de Socorros Mutuos el Hogar de los Españoles,” *Hispania: revista española de historia*, Vol. 62 (2002), No. 211, 505–19. Years later the priest, Gabriel Palmer, remembered with bitterness that he had not received a single peseta from the Spanish state to fund his mission (see CDEE, “El Hogar de los Españoles,” 001/009, Letter from Gabriel Palmer to Manuel Hernández, chairman of the Hogar, Madrid, 17.03.1930).

¹⁰¹ APP, BA2154, Préfecture de police, Service des Renseignements généraux et des jeux, cabinet, 11.04.1914, Report about Spanish Catholic charities in the Plaine-Saint-Denis.

¹⁰² Mariano Esteban de Vega, “La asistencia liberal española: beneficencia pública y previsión particular,” *Historia Social* (Valencia), No. 13 (1992), 32; Antonio Niño Rodríguez, “Políticas de asimilación y de preservación de la nacionalidad de los emigrantes españoles en Francia, 1900-1936” *Hispania: revista española de historia*, Vol. 62 (2002), No. 211, 433–82.

¹⁰³ CDEE, “El Hogar de los Españoles,” 001/006, List of donors to the project of monument of the queen Maria Cristina, 18.06.1929 (Francisco Mateos, Emilio Fernández, Basilio Curiel).

accident went to the Claretan fathers to ask for the contact of a lawyer.¹⁰⁴ As far as religious practice was concerned, the register of communions of the Patronato attests at least to some degree of following among Spanish residents of the cités. For instance, Pedro Moreno, who had been born at No. 96 and baptized at the Sainte-Geneviève church in 1914, took his communion at the Patronato in June 1925, as did his at least one of his neighbours at No. 96.¹⁰⁵

Some residents had not waited for the foundation of the Patronato to follow sermons in their own language. During the war, they had attended masses at the Spanish mission in Paris, on rue de la Pompe –a long way from the Plaine, even with the newly opened metro station at Porte de la Chapelle.¹⁰⁶ Initially, Spanish families from the Plaine made up a sizable proportion of those who received their sacraments at the Mission. In 1916-1917, more than one in ten baptisms celebrated there concerned Plainards, among which a third (6/18) came from either No. 96 or No. 100 Av. de Paris.¹⁰⁷ In that same biennium, Plainards also accounted for 9.5% of marriages, including one couple of No. 96 residents.¹⁰⁸ Those proportions fell in the following

¹⁰⁴ AGA, 54/11001, leg. 25, Patronato Saint-Denis, Plaine-Saint-Denis.

¹⁰⁵ AD93, 1E66/274, Saint-Denis, Civil registry, births, 1914, vol. 2, No. 833, 29.06.1914; Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, Patronato español, “Registro de comuniones,” Pedro Moreno, Armancia Iglesias.

¹⁰⁶ In 1916, the claretan chaplain from that Mission started to receive delegation from the priest of Plaine-Saint-Denis to administer sacraments to the latter’s parishioners. Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1916, No. 10. All following statistics are drawn from Archivo de la Misión católica española de París (rue de la Pompe), bautismos, No. 1 (1916-1918), 2 (1918-1921), 3 (1922-1925); matrimonios, No. 1 (1916-1918), 2 (1918-1919), 3 (1920-1921), 4 (1922-1924).

¹⁰⁷ This figure does not include a baptism whose witnesses were No. 96 residents: Archivo de la Misión católica española de París, bautismos, No. 1, 1916-1918 (Julio), 1916 No. 15, 30.07.1916, Fernanda Montero.

¹⁰⁸ That couple actually went twice to rue de la Pompe in 1916, first to baptise their second child in March, and then to get religiously married in April, which they had been prevented from doing by the outbreak of the war immediately after their civil wedding in 1914. See Archivo de la Misión católica española de París, matrimonios, No. 1, 1916-1918, No. 9, 24.04.1916 (also in Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1916, No. 19); AD93, 1E66/329, Saint-Denis, marriages, 28.06.1914-31.12.1914, No. 447, 18.07.1914, Marcelo López Bola and Gabriela Varona y Varona.

years as more and more people from various neighbourhoods came to the Mission, and fewer Plainards.¹⁰⁹

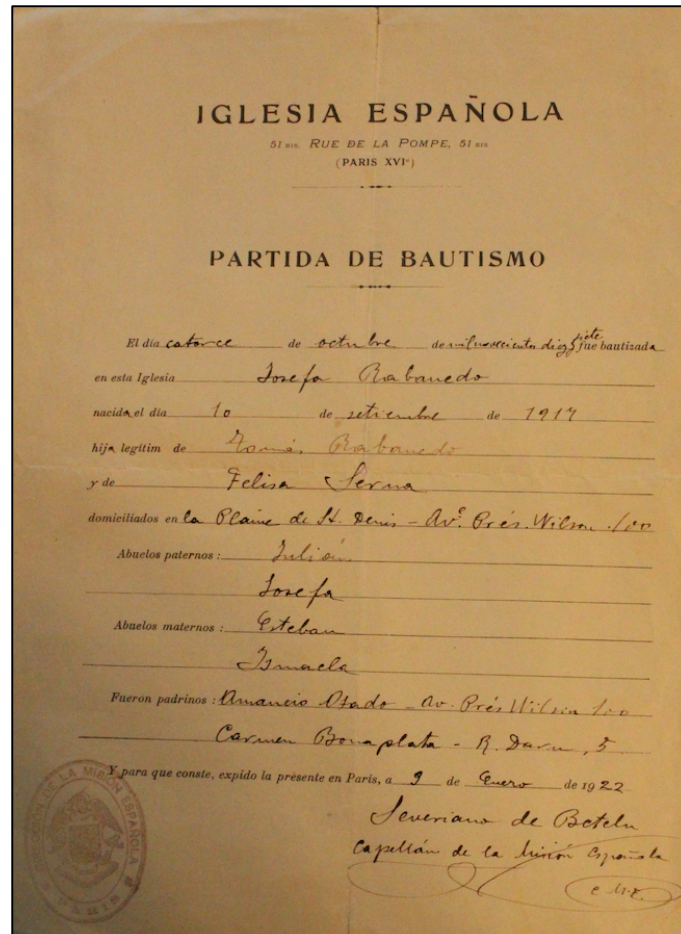


Figure 7: Certificate of baptism of Joséfa Rabanedo at the Spanish Mission on 14.10.1917

¹⁰⁹ People from the Plaine-Saint-Denis only accounted for 3,7% of baptisms and 4,5% of marriages between 1918-1922, before vanishing altogether in later years. But the proportion of residents among Plainards remained quite high at least until 1920, when Spaniards in other parts of the Plaine-Saint-Denis (in particular around rue de la Justice, today rue Cristino-García) were not that many. Residents from the cités accounted for instance for 5 out of 14 marriages of couples from the Plaine celebrated at the Mission between 1918 and 1922.

Did the attendance of the Mission and then the Patronato result from stronger ties to Spain and a higher sense of Spanishness?¹¹⁰ It is probable, and it certainly also strengthened this sense of national allegiance, as their initiators had planned. On the other hand, it should be put into perspective by recalling the choices made by other families. Between 1918 and 1922, no fewer than eight religious marriages involving at least one Spanish-born resident of No. 96 or No. 100 took place at the Plaine parish church, and were celebrated by the French priest.¹¹¹ Not even in 1916-1917, when several families of residents went to rue de la Pompe for their sacraments, did the Mission prove more popular than the Plaine church in absolute terms.¹¹²

To conclude this point about the indirect channels of nationalisation and ethnicisation, we must add a few words about the press and about national gatherings. We have not been able to find traces attesting that the foreign residents who could read consumed newspapers in their own language.¹¹³ Some probably did, but the circulation of such publications in the Plaine-Saint-Denis must have been extremely scarce. Descendants of Italian and Spanish residents who mentioned newspapers only referred to French-speaking titles.¹¹⁴ Other modes of activation of national allegiances were similarly limited. In 1929, the contribution of three Spanish residents to a public subscription for the construction of a monument to the Queen of Spain seems to have

¹¹⁰ The importance of the mission to maintain a sense of Spanishness has already been highlighted in the historiography. See for instance in Laura Oso Casas, "La comunidad: relaciones sociales en la diáspora," in Laura Oso Casas (ed.), *Trans-ciudadanos: hijos de la emigración española en Francia*, Madrid: Fundación Francisco Largo Caballero, 2008, 191–2.

¹¹¹ Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1920, No. 19, 45, 79, 139, 144; 1922, No. 4, 25, 66.

¹¹² Celebrated at the Mission in those years: 1 marriage and 6 baptisms of residents' families, against 1 marriage and 15 baptisms at the local church. Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, marriages, 1916, No. 7; baptisms, 1916, No. 24, 30, 63, 76, 140, 141, 149; 1917, No. 13, 14, 26, 27, 28, 32, 115, 154.

¹¹³ None of the sources we have consulted, including the interviews with residents' descendants, have yielded any trace of Italian, German or Spanish-speaking newspapers in the Plaine-Saint-Denis at the period under scrutiny. It is possible, however, that residents would have accessed this type of material when migrants returned from a trip to their native country, or at institutions such as the Spanish Patronato.

¹¹⁴ Int. Bouchard (No. 16), 17.04.2016; Int. Rongione (No. 50), 21.07.2016; Int. Hertzler (No. 35), 10.09.2016.

remained isolated.¹¹⁵

It is unclear whether festivals had a greater impact. On Bastille Day, celebrations on the Avenue were rather small compared to the city centre.¹¹⁶ The action taken by municipal authorities to ensure the 14th of July was meaningful for locals by distributing extraordinary benefits to the poor regardless of their origin, certainly had a concrete effect on residents.¹¹⁷ But the understanding of the patriotic dimension of this handout is less certain. For their part, Italian migrants of the Plaine did not take part in any national festival that we know of. By contrast, once the Spanish Patronato was founded, it organised festivals to honour several patron saints. The specific combination of nationalist and religious rhetoric would have been familiar to residents from their past experience in their village. And yet once again, it is hard to assess the following of such events outside of the regulars of the Spanish societies.¹¹⁸ The only information at our disposal suggests that Italian and Spanish festivals were never a major affair.¹¹⁹

Voting

On election day, questions of nationality were undoubtedly relevant. And yet boundaries, in that context as well, were less clear-cut than in the legal theory. A careful examination of electoral registers reveals that some enfranchised residents of the cités failed to register in Saint-Denis, whether they were naturalised citizens, or

¹¹⁵ Archives of the Fundación 1° de Mayo, CDEE, “El Hogar de los Españoles,” 001/006, *doc. cit.*

¹¹⁶ See SDMA, *Bulletin municipal officiel*, 6.02.1887, 11.08.1900. By 1895, games for children and free balls were organised on the Avenue de Paris (SDMA, *Bulletin municipal officiel*, 11.07.1895).

¹¹⁷ SDMA, 1Q2, 27.06.1898; 1Q8, 23.06.1915.

¹¹⁸ CDEE, “El Hogar de los Españoles,” 1/14, Letter from the Secretary general of the Real Deportivo Español de París, to the Chairman of the Hogar, 13.10.1929. On the echo of festivals in Spain, see the “solemn and patriotic” festival held in October 1914 the Valle de Valdebezana, to honour at once the Pilar Virgin and also the Spanish flag (*El Castellano. Diario católico*, 12.10.1914).

¹¹⁹ Int. Bour (No. 19), 2016.09.14. Mr. Bour’s mother, born in 1924 and a long-time resident of impasse Trézel, remembered that “*il n’y avait pas d’esprit communautaire à la Plaine, il n’y avait pas de fête particulière pour les uns et les autres*” (“There was no spirit of community in the Plaine, there was no particular festival for this or that group”).

French migrants from another region.¹²⁰ Within the same family, voting rights could vary. Two brothers who had opted for France in 1872 waited eight years before filing their registration. Quite inexplicably, one –who resided in the cités– was inscribed on the lists, but not the other, because he failed to prove his French nationality.¹²¹ Another factor that could blur the line between foreigners and nationals was the disenfranchisement of many male residents due to criminal convictions.¹²² Dozens of residents were in that case, even some of the shopkeepers.¹²³ On the other hand, some young men who, in theory, did not have the legal right to vote because they had been convicted of criminal offences before their majority, may still have cast a ballot, since their name was automatically put on the lists.¹²⁴ When it came to voting, a major civic ritual, differences between who could and could not participate were far from black and white.

¹²⁰ Only Saint-Denis natives and taxpayers were automatically included (law of 7.07.1874 on the lists of municipal voters). In order to register, one needed to obtain a proof of deregistration from one's previous town of residency [add. ref.] For an example of resident who was slow to register, see Lucien Perrin, from the Vosges, who waited at least 5 years after his arrival in the Plaine (see AD93, 1E66/176, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1882, No. 1492; and SDMA, 1 K 1/33-38, Electoral registers, 1888–94.)

¹²¹ SDMA, E42, No. 36, 17.03.1872, Nicolas Blimer; E44, No. 589, 30.06.1872, Jean Blimer; SDMA, 1K1/25, Electoral register, 1881; AD93, 4U7/452, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, 1881 (1), 18.02.1881, Nicolas Blimer; AD93, 1E66/146, Saint-Denis, births - 1883, No. 732, 24.06.1883.

¹²² Anyone convicted of a serious crime, or of felonies such as indecency, vagrancy, were automatically and permanently stripped of their voting rights, as were those sentenced to prison for theft or fraud. Those convicted of rebellion or verbal or physical assault of police officers were deprived of their voting rights for five years; two convictions for manifest inebriation resulted in two years of voting right suspension. Naturalised citizens who had been sentenced in France before acquiring the French citizenship, remained disenfranchised if their conviction fell under the above categories. See Ambroise Rendu, *Code électoral ou Manuel pratique des élections municipales, départementales et politiques*, Paris: G. Pedone-Lauriel, 1885, 34–45; Maurice Bécart, *Manuel pratique des droits de l'électeur dans la révision des listes électorales*, Paris: M. Bécart, 1904.

¹²³ Hector Stéphane Voyenne, owner of the bar at No. 96 from 1907 to 1909 had been sentenced to prison for theft and also to a fine for wine tampering, both of which resulted in losing the right to vote (AVP, D4R1 557, Military registers, 1888, No. 3653).

¹²⁴ For an example of resident who was improperly registered for four years before being struck out, AVP, Military registers, D4R1 1398, 1907, No. 2948; SDMA, 1K1/53-6, Electoral register, 1909-1912, Jules Georges Stéphane Guyonvernier. This discrepancy was not uncommon, and the officers running the voting precinct were not allowed to deny the vote to any legally registered voters (Ambroise Rendu, *op. cit.*, 233-4. The only remedy was for the courts, if presented with a claim of irregularity, to subtract from the tally the votes cast by irregularly registered voters, as confirmed by the Conseil d'État, 28.06.1893, *Élections d'Albertville*, rec. Sirey, 1895, 50).

The sources indicate that those who petitioned the authorities for rehabilitation and restoration of their civil rights were rare. It was the case of Chrétien Champion, a resident at No. 100 who had been sentenced to one month in jail for stealing a pickaxe, and who managed to recover his voting rights after just six years.¹²⁵ Another glassworker at No. 100 who had been sentenced to 15 days in jail for vagrancy was deprived of his franchise for a decade, only to lose it again a few years later for insulting police officers.¹²⁶ There is little doubt that those actively seeking the reinstatement of their voting rights, or simply the issuance of their electoral card after their naturalisation, regarded it as a symbol of integration.¹²⁷ The question is how many actually took these steps.

Low voting turnout in the Plaine reduced the relevance of national distinctions.¹²⁸ As for the electoral participation of foreigners in their home country, it was only a remote possibility, at a time when consulates did not collect the emigrants' ballot. This did not prevent some residents of the cités from being recorded as having cast a vote in their hometowns. In the case of the Gabriele brothers, this was a fraud –of which they may or may not have been aware of– since they were in France at the time of the election in 1910.¹²⁹ But this shows that from the standpoint of the emigration country, there was nothing in itself surprising in having returnees exercise their franchise when they happened to be home on election day –regardless, in some cases, of their legal nationality.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ AVP, D1U6 305, Tribunal correctionnel de la Seine, 8.06.1888, Procureur de la République c. Schampion Chrétien et Doerflinger Chrétien, 100 av. de Paris (bears mention of rehabilitation order on 30.01.1894); SDMA, CT575, Letter-form from the Préfecture de la Seine to the Mayor of Saint-Denis (about Chrétien Schampion), 6.09.1893.

¹²⁶ AVP, Military registers, D4R1 1013, 1899, No. 2045, Victor Thieffin.

¹²⁷ Michel Offerlé, "L'électeur et ses papiers. Enquête sur les cartes et les listes électorales (1848-1939)," *Genèses*, No. 13, 1993, 52–3.

¹²⁸ See SDMA, CT513, 514, 519.

¹²⁹ AS Caserta, Busta 23, f.229, "Legione territoriale dei Carabinieri reali di Napoli, tenenza di Sora, Informazioni relative all'elezioni politiche del 17 aprile 1910," 16.05.1910.

¹³⁰ From 1912 onwards, the Italian law provided that children born to Italians abroad were regarded as Italians unless they voluntarily declined their nationality at their majority; this came in direct conflict with French law which provided that those same children automatically became French, barring the

The son of one of the Gabriele brothers, Gaetano, was himself arrested for voting fraud twenty years after his father. He had voted in Saint-Denis on behalf of a friend, using the friend's electoral card, whereas Gaetano himself was an Italian and a minor. The friend, also of Italian descent but a naturalised French citizen, testified that Gaetano had asked him to let him vote in his stead. The episode could suggest an eagerness and curiosity for Gaetano to participate just as fully as his peers, at a time when both naturalisations and the act of voting became more frequent in his social circles.¹³¹ Political citizenship could also be a matter of social emulation and overcome, in people's minds, the legal definition of nationality.

Politics and unionism

One of the paradoxes of Saint-Denis, which was to become the paradigmatic example of municipal communism in the interwar period, was that for many years the Plaine remained impervious, at least electorally, to socialism.¹³² Some glassworkers were certainly sympathetic to advanced ideas. They could be spotted reading *La Petite République* in 1900,¹³³ and it is true that, as we have said, the local socialist group organised meetings at No. 102 on a regular basis in 1901-1902 and again in 1905.¹³⁴ Its secretary, named Clérisse, was a sales representative who was active for years in the Plaine as a community organiser.¹³⁵ That man knew many people at No. 96-102.

same exception. Naturalised subjects lost their Italian nationality, but often remained inscribed on electoral registers in Italy. See the Italian law 1912/555 of 5.06.1912.

¹³¹ APP, CB 92.26, 1930/479, 22.03.1930; FNA, BB/11/7863, 10084 x 22, Gabriele.

¹³² *Le Réveil des verriers*, 1.04.1893, 1.07.1910, 01.12.1912; Jean-Paul Brunet, *op. cit.*, 280.

¹³³ *Le Soleil*, 25.03.1900; *La Petite République socialiste*, 31.03.1900.

¹³⁴ See chapter 3, note 161.

¹³⁵ SDMA, CT424, Registre de récépissé de déclarations de réunions publiques, 1881-1907, 18.12.1902, 2.12.1903. Born in Paris in 1867, Henri Clérisse fils was also running the local branch of the "Association internationale antimilitariste" (SDMA, CT424, 10.03.1906) and the freethinking society called "L'Égalité sociale" (SDMA, CT424, Letter from M. Clérisse fils to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 25.09.1906). He unsuccessfully ran for the city council in 1904, and for the Senate in 1905 (SDMA, 1K1/46, Electoral registers, 1902; *BMOSD*, 1.06.1904, 10.02.1905). He also managed the "International Sporting Club" of the Plaine and was an accomplished boxer (*Messidor*, 9.04.1907). In addition, he took part in the census operations (SDMA, 4H3, Collective letter to the Mayor of Saint-

His family, originally based in a nearby suburb, had owned and inhabited for years a building on the Avenue where many inhabitants of the cités had themselves resided in the 1880s and 1890s.¹³⁶ But it is unsure how many of the residents attended the meetings at Poullain's, which were usually reserved to active members of the socialist group.¹³⁷



*Figure 8: Poster for conference and drinks organised by the local socialists
at No. 102 on 21.12.1902*

Denis by the census agents, 19.09.1914) and was later a member of the Caisse des écoles (SDMA, CT100, Letter from Henri Clérisse fils to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 29.11.1921).

¹³⁶ AD93, 4U7/479, 19.01.1892, Vve Clérisse c. Bronne; SDMA, CT556, Sommaton du 13.12.1898 contre Clérisse; AVP, D4R1 488, 1885, No. 1506, Henry Clément Victor Clérisse. Sources show that Clérisse was friendly with at least some of them, which suggests they may have joined the meetings he set up. See AD93, 1E66/329, Saint-Denis, marriages, 28.06.1914-31.12.1914, No. 446, 18.07.1914; AD93, 1E66/337, Saint-Denis, marriages, 1920 (Jan.-Jul.), No. 434, 17.04.1920.

¹³⁷ *L'Émancipation*, 5.07.1902.

Jean-Paul Brunet has shown how poorly, before the First World War, the socialists fared in the Plaine, perhaps due to the low level of class consciousness and political involvement of the newcomers.¹³⁸ Some have also argued that Breton workers were just as unconcerned with politics as other migrants, despite being deliberately courted by socialist parties which were well aware that, as opposed to Italians or Spaniards, Breton migrants had the right to vote.¹³⁹ As a Plainard born in 1889 wrote in his memoirs, “*la politique ne prenait pas un rôle qu’on lui donne à l’heure actuelle! On en parlait quand on revenait du service militaire, et encore...*”¹⁴⁰

We mentioned that contrary to many other glass factories, strikes at Legras were rare and short.¹⁴¹ They did not mobilise many workers. In 1890, only 10% of the workforce may have joined the movement.¹⁴² In a three-day strike in 1900, only some of the *cueilleurs* stopped working, who themselves only totaled about 100 out of 800 workers.¹⁴³ After Raphaël Spreisser took part in a strike in 1888, he seems to have regretted it. He had not been able to receive any financial relief during the conflict, because of his German nationality.¹⁴⁴ As for the anarchists, there were a few dozen of them in the centre of Saint-Denis, among which a few Italians; but apparently none in the Plaine.¹⁴⁵

In 1910, union leaders in the Paris area deplored that a majority of Plaine-Saint-Denis glassworkers attended mass instead of coming to a union meeting.¹⁴⁶ Poverty

¹³⁸ Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 280.

¹³⁹ Roger Bourderon, Pierre De Perreti (eds.), *Histoire de Saint-Denis*, Toulouse: Privat, 1988, 250-1.

¹⁴⁰ SDMA, Archives Tissot, 21 S 055 002, feuillet 4, 9 (“Politics did not have the role that it has today! We would talk about it upon returning from military service, if ever...”).

¹⁴¹ See chapter 3, note 97. Compare with the frequency of strikes in other factories in FNA, F7/13930, “Grèves. Verriers, miroitiers, souffleurs de verre, vitriers (1908-1934).”

¹⁴² *La Petite République*, 17.05.1890.

¹⁴³ *Le Soleil*, 10.05.1900; *JSD*, 10.05.1900; *JSD*, 13.05.1900.

¹⁴⁴ FNA, BB/11/1728, 6337 x 83, Letter from Raphaël Spreisser to the Justice Minister, Aubervilliers, 29.05.1888; on the 1888 strike, see *Le Réveil des verriers*, 23.06.1895.

¹⁴⁵ Olivier Delous, “Les Anarchistes à Paris et en banlieue, 1880-1914. Représentations et sociologie,” master’s thesis in history, University of Paris I, 1996, 129–30; 267.

¹⁴⁶ *Le Réveil des verriers*, 1.07.1910.

was a likely factor of this incapacity or unwillingness to join forces.¹⁴⁷ The anticlericalism of the socialists might also have been a barrier for some Spanish and Italian workers, though it is hard to say whether this was a relevant criterion for any inhabitant of the cités. César Iglesias asked –and was granted– a recommendation from the Mayor of Saint-Denis in 1914, alluding to their common socialist credentials. But his situation was not representative, as he was particularly well-integrated in France.¹⁴⁸ For a few months in 1922, at No. 102, a communist society organised weekly gatherings in Spanish, with the aim of explicitly countering the clerical propaganda of the Claretan missionaries.¹⁴⁹ Lacking more information regarding attendance, it is next to impossible to measure the impact of those meetings. But other clues do point to a growing involvement of residents in national politics after the war, which could bear witness to the nationalisation of their social concerns.

More than a few Italian and Spanish workers at No. 96 and 100 eventually joined the *Confédération générale du travail*, although the exact date of their entry remains uncertain.¹⁵⁰ At No. 100, an avowed communist sympathiser from the Cassino area made clear in the 1930s that he wanted to acquire his citizenship to be able to vote. This was also probably the case for an Italian neighbour of his at No. 102, also reported as a communist.¹⁵¹ A man from the Montaña de Burgos who had lived at No. 100 in the early 1910s, had become an active socialist by 1919;¹⁵² a former Italian child

¹⁴⁷ Jean-Paul Brunet, “Une banlieue ouvrière...,” *op. cit.*, 443.

¹⁴⁸ SDMA, 4H3/3, August 1914, Letter from César Iglesias to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, no date [1.08.1914]. See chapter 2, note 200.

¹⁴⁹ *Recueil des actes administratifs de la Préfecture du département de la Seine*, Jan. 1922, 3–4, excerpts from *Journal Officiel*, 5.01.1922; APP, BA2157, “Espagne: Parti communiste espagnol,” Préfecture de police, Service des renseignements généraux et des jeux, cabinet, 18.07.1923, “Rapport au sujet de sociétés artistiques espagnoles qui se livreraient à la propagande communiste”.

¹⁵⁰ FNA, BB/11/8198, 15099 x 23, Antoine Pirolli. Others include Thomas Rabanedo (Int. Federmeier, No. 47, 23.11.2016); Thomas Greco (FNA, 19770898/138, 50134 x 38); Joseph and Julie Rongione (FNA, 19780029/135, 24629 x 47); Miguel Barquin (FNA, 19780030/257, 3032 x 48); Sotero Moreno (FNA, 19780007/234, 13409 x 46); Jean and Françoise Carnevale (FNA, 19780013/156, 21168 x 46). Some Plainards were members of the union as early as 1912: see APP, CB 92.9, 1912/916, 20.09.1912.

¹⁵¹ FNA, 19770881/45, 25658 x 33, Jean-Antoine Verrecchia; Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016; FNA, 19770875/184, 18950 x 32, Ugo Zangrilli.

¹⁵² The name is Agapito Ruiz. See FNA, BB/11/8431, 26780 x 24, Ricardo Ruiz.

worker from the cités subscribed, in the mid-1920s, to the revolutionary newspaper *Le Libertaire*.

Although emigrants rarely voted in their home country's elections, their political affiliations would commonly include transnational features. We have not found much evidence of fascist sympathies among residents or former inhabitants of the cités.¹⁵³ A resident born at No. 96 in the 1930s remembers that in his youth, when Italian gatherings were organised in the neighbourhood, fascist salutes and slogans were commonplace.¹⁵⁴ If true, that presence of fascism would have fostered national identifications among Italian residents. As for Louis Pirolli, he would be rumoured after the Second World War of having leant towards Jacques Doriot's far-right party, the *Parti populaire français*. Slander or not, this attests in any case to his involvement in French rather than Italian politics.¹⁵⁵

The impact of Spanish politics on residents suggests an even stronger intersection, in their case, of national identifications and political involvement. Ambrosio Luengo Marcos, who lived at No. 96 between 1925 and 1931, became receptive to the revolutionary propaganda from the revolutionary union *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, which convened a few meetings in the Plaine-Saint-Denis protesting Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. Ambrosio eventually went back to Spain and took part in an armed action by the union in December 1933, for which he was sentenced to four years in prison.¹⁵⁶ One of his brothers would go on to fight in the Civil war on the Republican side, as did at least four of their neighbours from No. 96. Another of their countrymen,

¹⁵³ Fascist sympathisers from the Caserta and Molise regions were certainly not unheard of in the north-eastern suburbs of Paris. See e.g. AVP, D2U8 300, Trenti, Ongaro, Scaramucci, 14.01.1931.

¹⁵⁴ Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018.

¹⁵⁵ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27.

¹⁵⁶ Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cáceres, JIRP/19:33, "Expediente de responsabilidades políticas contra Ambrosio Luengo Marcos, vecino de Navalmoral de la Mata"; Centro documental de la memoria histórica, Salamanca, AP, Delegación Nacional de Servicios Documentales de la Presidencia del Gobierno, Secretaría General, Fichero de la Secretaría General y de la Sección Político Social, fichero No. 37, Ficha de Ambrosio Luengo Marcos; Natacha Lillo, *Id.*, 362.

who had lived at No. 100 in the 1910s, was executed by the nationalists in his native village.¹⁵⁷ Other trajectories reveal early sympathies for communism in certain families. A long-time resident at No. 96 is remembered to hosting a Republican refugee in the family's apartment.¹⁵⁸ A neighbour of his, born in the cités, would be deported and die at Auschwitz because of his communist activities.¹⁵⁹

Military service

Voting and political participation were national affairs, but not as much as military service. In the cités, at any given time, there were always fathers or sons away on military duty. The days of the *tirage au sort**, in February, and of the *conseil de révision**, in April, were momentous episodes for Frenchmen. For every 18-year-old, they were rites of passage, combining a patriotic dimension with the accession to full masculinity.¹⁶⁰ The Préfet and military officers making up the *conseil de révision* were all in uniform, and embodied the nation like never before in the residents' lives. After being cleared to serve, conscripts celebrated together in *débats*, and most displayed their national pride by sporting cockades bought from street vendors outside city hall.¹⁶¹ But those rejoicing over a "good number"¹⁶² or a discharge from service were just as many. Indeed, families anticipated the draft with anxiety, as it was often

¹⁵⁷ The names are Baldomero Luengo (Ambrosio's brother), Pedro Arribas, Bernardo Luengo (unrelated to Ambrosio), Ernesto Curiel, and José Valle. See Natacha Lillo, *Id.*, annexes, 81–7. Also, some residents who returned to Spain in the mid-1930s would come back as war refugees, like Eugenio Gómez and Maria Gómez née Peña, from No. 96 (Int. Hamadou, No. 53, 5.12.2016).

¹⁵⁸ Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 24.07.2018.

¹⁵⁹ Int. Federmeier (No. 47), 23.11.2016; Int. Verrecchia (No. 39), 4.09.2016; FNA, BB/11/8198, 15099 x 23, Antoine Pirolli; APP, 328 w 29, No. 36123, Agapito Ruiz; FNA, BB/11/12864, 2182 x 30, Dominique Tari; AD93, 1E66/283, Saint-Denis, births, 1921, No. 339, 7.03.1921, Thomas Sanchez.

¹⁶⁰ Antoine Prost, "Jeunesse et société dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'histoire*, No. 13 (1987), 35–43; Alexandre Tourscher, "Bons pour la fête: les rituels de la conscription en Alsace," *Revue d'Alsace*, No. 141 (2015), 363–77; Odile Roynette, *Bon pour le service, l'expérience de la caserne en France à la fin du XIX^e siècle*, Paris: Belin, 1999.

¹⁶¹ JSD, 3.05.1908; APP, CB 92.5, 1909/388, 9.05.1909; SDMA, Tissot papers, 21 S 055 002, feuillet 13, 1.

¹⁶² See glossary, "*Tirage au sort*."

synonymous with economic problems.¹⁶³ Absent a medical condition or a statutory exemption –such as being the elder son of a widow or having a brother already on duty–, residents could hope for partial exemptions on economic grounds, or at least a postponement of service.¹⁶⁴

As opposed to voting, foreign residents could undergo their own military screenings at their consulate in Paris. This was yet another mandatory encounter between the States and their nationals, and a concrete marker of national identifications. But all nationalities were not equal in that respect. Alsatians and Lorrainers who were technically German and subject to the draft in the Empire were not expected to comply.¹⁶⁵ Here and there, male residents from the annexed provinces would try and hide their German military record. Asked by the police about his military situation, a naturalised glassworker and long-time resident at No. 96 replied: “*J’appartiens à la classe 1885.*” That was technically true, but he failed to specify that 1885 was his levy for the German military service, which he had accomplished in Alsace.¹⁶⁶

In Spain, the unfair system of *quintas* remained in force until 1912. It allowed well-off Spaniards to considerably abridge their service by paying contributions or finding someone to replace them.¹⁶⁷ The notoriously hard living conditions of the troops, the duration of active service (four years until 1882, three years after that) and the high mortality rates in colonial wars made the Spanish draft very unpopular in the late 19th

¹⁶³ This may be the reason why a Plainard who got through the recruitment operations in 1907 said that contrary to the *tirage au sort*, the conseil de révision was less joyful; “*chacun y allait de son côté.*” SDMA, *Archives Tissot*, doc. cit., 2 (“everyone went on his own”).

¹⁶⁴ By virtue of Art. 22 of the law of 15.07.1889. See SDMA, CT151, Commissions des soutiens de famille, pensions et secours, and for residents, paris-tenements.eu, additional data, “Military registers.”

¹⁶⁵ There was some ambivalence from the French authorities though, with the expeditious naturalisation procedure granted to those who had indeed served in the German Army. See chapter 2, note 26.

¹⁶⁶ He served in FNA, BB/11/2397, 1265 x 90, Philippe Wernert and Catherine Schneider; AVP, Military registers, D4R1 732, 1893, No. 1505, Philippe Wernert; AD93, 4U7/1024, Commissariat de police de Saint-Denis-Sud, audition of Philippe Wernert, 25.08.1906 (“I served with the levy of 1885”).

¹⁶⁷ A similar system had been abandoned in France in 1872.

century, as evidenced by high numbers of exiles and deserters.¹⁶⁸ Although documents show that a number of Spanish male residents at Nos. 96-102 had fulfilled their military obligations in Spain before emigrating to the Plaine-Saint-Denis, it seems that some Spaniards who grew up in the cités were indeed reluctant to go back to serve.¹⁶⁹

As opposed to their countrymen on other continents, Italian emigrants in Europe were not exempt from military service in Italy.¹⁷⁰ At the same time, the Italian state's contradictory imperatives –encouraging the eventual, free return of emigrants once they achieved economic success, and building a strong military– resulted in a policy of tolerance towards emigrant conscripts who decided to follow their own schedule and serve when they pleased.¹⁷¹ Available evidence shows that Italian residents from the cités who missed their military assessment at the consulate would not face any consequence, provided they came at a later date.¹⁷²

Both Spanish and Italian kingdoms periodically amnestied draft-dodgers in the hope of luring them back. Notes on a military register in Italy also provides an example of the manner in which the inhabitants of the cités understood the rules and tried to exploit them. When his turn to serve had arrived, Giustino Pirolli thought he had a solid motive of exemption: his brother Luigi was currently in uniform. Unbeknownst to him though, the law had changed a few months before, and his request was denied.¹⁷³ Giustino was eventually exempted at the consulate as mentally retarded –which we

¹⁶⁸ Borja de Riquer i Permanyer, “La débil nacionalización española del siglo XIX,” *Historia Social*, No. 20 (Fall 1994), 110; Fernando Puell de la Villa, *El soldado desconocido: de la leva a la “mili” (1700-1912)*, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1996, 270 sqq.; José F. García Moreno, *Servicio militar en España (1913-1935)*, Madrid: Adalid, 1988.

¹⁶⁹ See the cases of residents who requested French citizenship just before they could be called to serve in Spain: FNA, BB/11/12221, 15851 x 29, Basilio Luengo; BB/11/12649, 37296 x 29, Crescensio Esteban.

¹⁷⁰ Italian law on emigration, No. 23 of 31.01.1901, Art. 33 (those exemptions did not apply in case of general mobilisation, though).

¹⁷¹ Caroline Douki, “The ‘Return Politics’ of a Sending Country: The Italian Case, 1880s–1914,” in Nancy L. Green, Roger Waldinger (eds.), *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and Their Homeland Connections*, Urbana (IL): University of Illinois Press, 2016, 36–50.

¹⁷² ASC Pozzilli, Lista di leva, 1886, No. 31, Pirolli Luigi.

¹⁷³ Italian law No. 763 of 15.12.1907 modifying the draft laws (see in particular Art. 6).

know he was not. This strongly suggests that he faked his condition to dodge the draft.¹⁷⁴

Military service contributed in no small part to the instrumental way in which residents navigated their national identifications. The case of two children who grew up at No. 100 and who declined their French nationality can illustrate this point.¹⁷⁵ Antoine Pirolli and his contemporary Pietro De Bellis, both born in the Plaine in 1902, declined the French citizenship in 1923, most probably to avoid military service. To prevent their automatic naturalisation, they first had to go to the Italian consulate and obtain a certificate, stating that they were regularly listed on the military draft registers and that they intended to retain their Italian nationality. But both eventually failed to report for military duty in Italy, falling through the cracks of both systems –before requesting French nationality again much later, once they were past the draft age.¹⁷⁶

From a legal perspective, nationality could be declined but also recovered, acquired, and lost. Looking at naturalisation itself is another way to measure the extent to which nationality became relevant both for residents and for the French institutions. It also highlights the role the migrant inhabitants of the cités played, in practice, in co-defining the notion of citizenship used in the naturalisation process.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ ASC Pozzilli, Lista di leva, classe 1888, No. 23, Giustino Pirolli; Royal decree No. 553 of 10.12.1896 on the list of conditions and imperfections exonerating from military service, Art. 14; FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino and Antonia Pirolli.

¹⁷⁵ French-born sons of immigrants who declined the French nationality were rare. In total, only 21 people born in Saint-Denis did so between 1893 and 1945. See Ministère de la santé publique et de la population, Direction du peuplement et des naturalisations, 7^e bureau, Maurice Loisel (ed.), *Liste alphabétique des enfants d'étrangers ayant décliné ou répudié la nationalité française (déclarations enregistrées entre le 22 juillet 1893 et le 31 décembre 1945)*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1946.

¹⁷⁶ FNA, BB/11/8198, 15099 x 23, Antoine Pirolli; APP, IA 152, No. 28080, Époux De Bellis Pietro; FNA, BB/11/7971, 3729 x 23, Pietro De Bellis. On Pietro De Bellis's presence at No. 100, see Archives paroissiales de Saint-Denis, 25/5, Paroisse Sainte-Geneviève de la Plaine, baptisms, 1902, No. 40, 22.03.1902. The De Bellis family went on to live rue Trézel, and from 1915, at No. 133 Av. de Paris.

¹⁷⁷ See Rogers Brubaker, "Citizenship and Naturalisation: Policies and Politics," in *Id.* (ed.), *Immigration and the Politics of Citizenship in Europe and North America*, Lanham (MD): German Marshall Fund and University Press of America, 1989, 99–127.

4.2. Switching sides

Naturalisation patterns

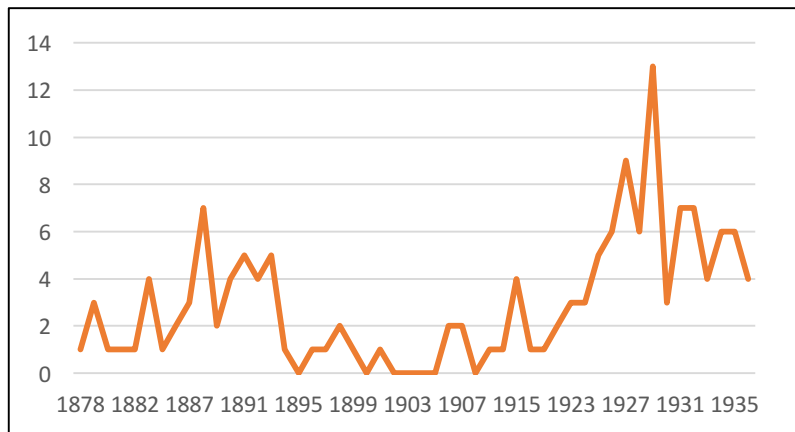
To this day, the French national archives have kept all ministerial requests of nationality, a unique collection which has remained unscathed, even from recent vicissitudes.¹⁷⁸ In these thousands of individual applications, we searched for residents of the cités. In the process, we ended up opening 288 files, mostly of one-time Dionysians*. More than half of those files (148) did concern past, current or future inhabitants at 96-102 Av. de Paris. Since nationality law, until the late 1920s, provided that women would follow the nationality of their husband, the main applicants were almost always male. Until 1931, the administrative forms to fill did not even contain a specific space for the wives' personal information.¹⁷⁹ The only women who were not applying as wives and daughters were French-born widows or divorcees who wanted to recover their original nationality; they were extremely rare.¹⁸⁰

A serial analysis of the sample indicates that naturalisation requests were heavily concentrated in time, first around 1890, then in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

¹⁷⁸ The Fontainebleau site of the FNA, where all the naturalisation files opened after 1930 and before 1961 were stored, was closed in 2014 because of a major safety hazard. The naturalisation records remained inaccessible for years, but eventually emerged undamaged. They were again made accessible to researchers after their transfer to Pierrefitte in the summer of 2018.

¹⁷⁹ Except for their parents' identity, and their earnings.

¹⁸⁰ Only 6 out of the 288 requests we consulted had been filed by single women.



*Figure 9: Number of naturalisation requests per year
filed by residents of the cités¹⁸¹*

The two chronological peaks correspond to two different sets of foreigners. The first one is almost entirely made up of Alsatians and Lorrainers who emigrated after the option period and sought to recover –or acquire, in the case of minors born after the annexation– French citizenship. Three decades later, almost all applicants were Italian or Spanish nationals.

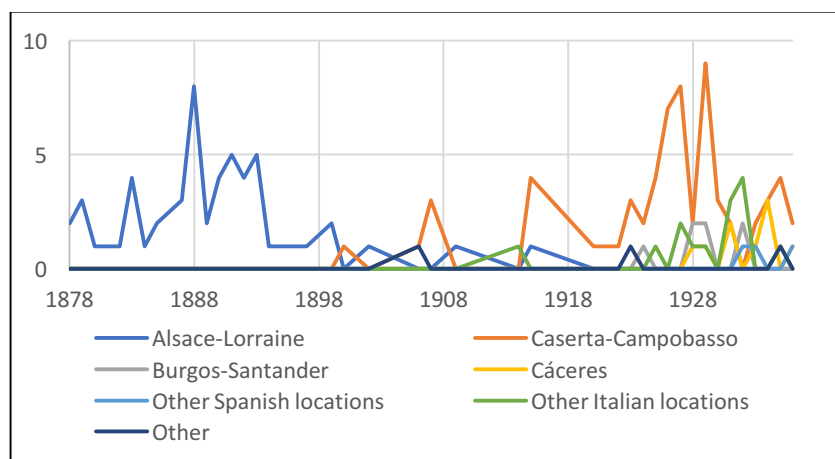


Figure 10: Number of naturalisation requests by residents per origin

¹⁸¹ Requests by couples were treated as one and are counted as such on the diagram.

The main stages of the naturalisation procedure remained more or less the same throughout the period. First, one had to send a request to the Minister of Justice.¹⁸² Then, the Ministry sent along a standardised form to the Prefect of police, asking him his opinion on the request, and also his take on the level of fees that could be demanded from the applicant. Completed by local police chiefs who conducted in-person interviews with the applicants, the forms contained a significant amount of personal information.¹⁸³ Upon receiving the file and the opinion back, the Ministry was ultimately responsible for making a decision over whether the naturalisation, or the application for permanent residency (“*admission à domicile*”) should proceed and result in a presidential decree.¹⁸⁴

What emerges, first, from the files is the clear priority of the French authorities throughout the period: adding new soldiers to the French army, and making sure every family contribute their fair share to the military effort.¹⁸⁵ Having male minor children was therefore a strong asset for applicants. Measuring the correlation, for married applicants living in the cités, between the number of their male sons under 21, and the time elapsed between the first request and the eventual decree, we find a coefficient of

¹⁸² In 1927, the Préfet de Police replaced the Minister as the authority to which applications had to be addressed.

¹⁸³ The main questions remained stable over the years: the applicants’ identities and profession; their parents’ and siblings’ names, nationalities, and places of residency; the date of arrival in France; the various places of residency in the country; the general behaviour and morality; the reputation; the military situation; the earnings of the family; the rent and taxes paid; the motivation of the application; the applicants’ political behaviour; their intent of returning to their home country; their mastery of French and their degree of assimilation. After each World War, questions about the applicants’ and their siblings’ occupations during the conflicts were inserted. After the Second World War was added the obligation to state the places of residency before coming to France, and also a list of all the employers since the arrival in France. Annexed to the form was a excerpt of the applicants’ criminal record, retrieved by the Ministry itself, and documents produced by the applicants, such as original birth certificates, medical certificate, military documents, certificates of residency and employment.

¹⁸⁴ Until 1927, the *admission à domicile* was a mandatory first phase of three years –unless applicants could already demonstrate their residence in France for ten years. At the end of the three years, the persons could apply for nationality.

¹⁸⁵ Paul Lawrence, “Naturalisation, Ethnicity and National Identity in France Between the Wars,” *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 20 (2001), No. 3, 1–24.

-0,12: the more sons, the quicker the naturalisation. Applications of couples without minor sons took on average 55% longer to reach a positive outcome than those with minor sons.¹⁸⁶ In the ministry's internal correspondence, files featuring male children in their early twenties were marked as "*urgent service militaire*" and treated expeditiously.¹⁸⁷ Exemption from the fees was also frequently granted to those who were young enough to accomplish their military duty.¹⁸⁸

Since it is much harder to have access to files of rejected applications, we are not in a position to assess the extent to which an impossibility to contribute to military service took a central part in negative decisions.¹⁸⁹ In the files we looked at, police chiefs who deemed the request "*sans intérêt du point de vue national*" (without interest from a national standpoint) for that reason, were generally overruled by the Préfet.¹⁹⁰ On the other hand, so strong was the need for new recruits that the Ministry pressured the fathers of France-born sons into accomplishing another, preemptive procedure. They were compelled to file a declaration at the *Justice de paix**, by which they opted irrevocably for the French nationality on behalf of their children, instead of waiting for their automatic naturalisation to occur at their twenty-first birthday. Legally, the procedure was completely unnecessary, since the sons and daughters could simply be included on the naturalisation decree of their parents. But the Ministry was not so sure, and did not want to take any chance; future conscripts were too

¹⁸⁶ The statistic is based on 19 couples of past, current or future residents without a minor son at the time of their request, and 62 with at least one. For all statistical calculations, see paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Naturalisation files."

¹⁸⁷ See e.g. FNA, BB/11/12221, 15851 x 29, Basilio Luengo; 19770876/220, 36180 x 32, Dino Giovanni Meneghetti ("urgent – military service").

¹⁸⁸ FNA, BB/11/3743, 6860 x 97, Charles Messmer; 19770879/4, 7312 x 33, Aldo Antonio Cassanego.

¹⁸⁹ Successful applications can be located via the *Journal officiel*, searchable in full-text mode. Then, once the date of decree is found, one can consult registers of correspondence between the decrees and original classification numbers at the Ministry of Justice (of the format "1234 x 20," the last two digits being the year of first registration of the naturalisation request). Those registers are currently being digitised by the FNA in the "Natnum" database. Unsuccessful applications, by contrast, are only searchable internally by the personnel of the FNA, by means of old and incomplete alphabetic files.

¹⁹⁰ FNA, 19770897/190, 41813 x 38, Nicolas Martínez; 19770898/96, 48156 x 38, Tommaso Carnevale.

important. In practice, this declaration became a firm prerequisite of any application of parents of French-born sons.¹⁹¹ Even the application of a resident at No. 100 who had been a decorated member of the Foreign Legion was put on hold until his son complied.¹⁹²

Other criteria were clearly secondary. Not listed in the form until the early 1930s, questions of language and integration were almost irrelevant.¹⁹³ In 1927, the difficulties in French displayed by a former resident of the cités who had lived in France for thirty years, was viewed by the police chief as suggesting an “*impossibilité à s’adapter*” (incapacity to fit in). But that this did not prevent his naturalisation.¹⁹⁴ Only criminal records could have real adverse consequence, as shown by the dismissal of the application filed by the *padrone* Joseph Carlesimo.¹⁹⁵ It must be noted, on that point, that the government was not exempt from blunders, for instance by confusing the criminal record of residents for that of their namesakes –which also contributed to delaying applications.¹⁹⁶ As for the income of applicants, substantial earnings could certainly help, but poverty was not detrimental.¹⁹⁷

The length of residency, which if proven constituted as such a qualifying ground for citizenship when it surpassed ten years, gradually became an important characteristic of successful applications. The following figure highlights that point:

¹⁹¹ See for instance FNA, BB/11/3593, Adolphe Dorflinger; BB/11/3608, 4656 x 02, Pierre Studer. Incidentally, it raised more revenue for the state, since applicants had to pay a fee for the declaration as well.

¹⁹² FNA, BB/11/11264, 77542 x 28, Costantino Gio Batta Orsi.

¹⁹³ Abdellali Hajjat, *Les Frontières de l’“identité nationale,”* Paris: La Découverte, 2012, 101.

¹⁹⁴ FNA, BB/11/10742, 51385 x 28, Jean and Caroline Puzzuoli.

¹⁹⁵ FNA, BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Joseph Carlesimo.

¹⁹⁶ FNA, BB/11/1759, 2075 x 84, Michel Winckler; BB/11/3806, 4647 x 00, Teresa Carlesimo née d’Agostini; BB/11/11165, 72534 x 28, Louis Gabriele. Note that decisions to strip nationality from former residents during the Second World War could also be based on faulty criminal files: see FNA, BB/11/12864, 2182 x 30, Dominique Tari.

¹⁹⁷ We found no correlation in our sample either between the time to process applications and the families’ income. Claire Zalc noted that since what mattered was the contribution to the army and the workforce, applicants who ran a shop frequently decided to remain silent about it (Claire Zalc, *Melting shops. Une histoire des commerçants étrangers en France*, Paris: Perrin, 2010, 138–40).

after an early phase in which the quick procedures put in place for Alsatians and Lorrainers lowered the average, it became customary for applicants to report 20 or even 30 years of residency in France, although they rarely had the documents to show for it. The overall linear growth reflects the fact that clusters of migrants of the same origin had arrived in the Plaine in the same years.

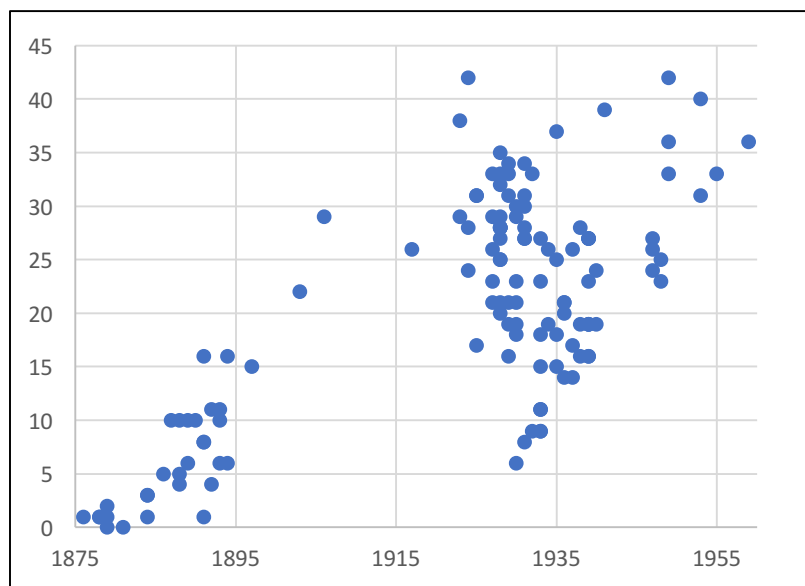


Figure 11: Number of years in France

*at the date of the naturalisation decree, as declared by successful applicants
(residents at Nos. 96-102 Av. de Paris/Wilson)*

Within the naturalisation process, administrative demands could be modulated and used as a means of punishment. Those regarded as having failed to request the naturalisation in time to serve in the military could see their request adjourned for a while.¹⁹⁸ These delays could last for years, and cause trouble to those, like Chrétien Lienhardt from No. 100, who needed to recover their authentic documents for private

¹⁹⁸ “Avis du Préfet de police,” in FNA, BB/11/7112, 274 x 20, Joseph François Rosso.

matters.¹⁹⁹ Another resident at No. 100 was punished by high fees because his military history was not pristine enough.²⁰⁰ These so-called “*droits du sceau*,” which had to be paid for the decree to be issued, were entirely discretionary. They very likely contributed to delaying the many applications until the late 1920s, when the fees started being indexed on income. The overall efficiency of those bureaucratic manoeuvres is dubious, however. Applicants were not aware of the criticism expressed internally by the ministry’s officials, and were left to wonder why their application had to linger.²⁰¹

Faced with a rather complex procedure, some residents were confused. To Raphaël Spreisser, the difference between “*admission à domicile*” and naturalisation was hard to comprehend.²⁰² One of his neighbours at No. 100, for his part, failed to ask for his naturalisation before his *admission à domicile* expired, which then delayed his recovery of French nationality by many years. Another Alsatian at No. 102 thought he was “opting” for France, although a full decade had passed since that particular procedure had been closed.²⁰³ Others who changed their mind in the middle of the process believed that refusing to sign off on the copy of the naturalisation decree would deprive it of its effects.²⁰⁴ A number of couples also suffered delays because they had moved houses by the time the Ministry or the Préfecture sent them letters asking for additional documents.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹ “*Je vous serais obligé... si vous vouliez bien me mettre en possession de papiers qui me sont indispensables pour affaires de famille.*” Letter from Chrétien Lienhardt, 100 Av. de Paris, Saint-Denis, to the Minister of Justice, 18.05.1893, in FNA, BB/11/2609, 10501 x 91, Chrétien Lienhardt (“I would appreciate... if you would please give me back the papers I need for family matters.”)

²⁰⁰ FNA, BB/11/1981, 2472 x 87, Florent Fixary.

²⁰¹ As one applicant put it, “*c’est vraiment désagréable de rester ainsi sans renseignement*”. See Letter from Filippo Quaglieri to the Préfet de police, 16.01.1931, in FNA, BB/11/12172, 13433 x 29, Filippo and Maria Quaglieri.

²⁰² FNA, BB/11/1728, 6337 x 83, Raphaël Spreisser.

²⁰³ FNA, BB/11/1650, 3545 x 82, Louis Herholt and Caroline Wymann.

²⁰⁴ FNA, 19770898/107, 48623 x 38, Raphaël Ricci.

²⁰⁵ See e.g. FNA, BB/11/2561, 5782 x 91, Joseph and Madeleine Schiel; BB/11/2185, 9634 x 88, Georges and Marie Schertz; BB/11/2411, 2602 x 90, Paul François Schwartz.

This does not mean that residents and their fellow applicants remain passive. Instead, they developed declarative tactics that altered the process to their benefit.²⁰⁶ First, they could lie or omit parts of their life stories. Among those who denied that convictions attached to their names in the *sommiers judiciaires* (the centralised criminal record system) actually concerned them, some were probably lying– and the government showed suprisingly little eagerness to take the pains to know for sure.²⁰⁷ Others, like the child-importers Bernardo Greco and Hermenegildo Saíz, or Raffaele Tari, the disgruntled lover involved in the massive 1900 fight described in the previous chapter, claimed they had a clean criminal record. This was accurate, strictly speaking. But we cannot help but notice that they made the safe decision to remain silent about their respective trials in Italy and France, in which they had eventually been acquitted.²⁰⁸ Raffaele, for maximal safety in that respect, filed his application under his second name, Joseph (Giuseppe).²⁰⁹

Residents who had been taught to lie as children maintained the same falsehoods decades later. Giustino Pirolli, Luigi’s little brother, never varied in his story that he had arrived in France in 1907 and started at Legras at the same time –we know the real date was 1901.²¹⁰ Both the landlord, M. Lutel, and the long-time concierge, M. Dupont, had only known No. 100 after 1907, so it was safe for Giustino to ask them for a certificate of residence, which would not contradict his version.²¹¹ To the question about his military service, Giustino’s answer as recorded by the police officer was that he had been called to arms in 1916. No mention was made of his 1908 exemption on pseudo-medical grounds. As for his brother Luigi, while his application was under

²⁰⁶ On this point, see Anne-Sophie Bruno, Philippe Rygiel, Alexis Spire, Claire Zalc, “Judged on Their Paperwork: The Processing of Migrant Applications for Residence and Work Permits in France (1917-1984),” *Population* (English ed.), Vol. 61 (2006), Nos. 5-6, 629–31.

²⁰⁷ See above, note 196. The Ministry officials could have accessed the original rulings, which bore more information than the criminal record, and could have helped clear the uncertainty.

²⁰⁸ See chapter 2, note 248; Ugo Cafiero, *art. cit.*; AVP, D1U6 727, 20.09.1900, *doc. cit.*

²⁰⁹ FNA, BB/11/8316, 21026 x 24, Joseph Tari.

²¹⁰ FNA, BB/11/13146, 16273 x 30, Giustino and Antonia Pirolli. See chapter 2.

²¹¹ *Id.*, Certificat de M. Dupont, 30.08.1929, pour M. Lutel.

review at the Ministry, he was arrested and briefly incarcerated for carrying an illegal firearm. This went luckily unnoticed by the naturalisation service, and he saw no reason to volunteer that information.²¹²

We have mentioned how Luigi Pirolli (who went by the name of Louis) sped up his naturalisation process by appealing to the French minister of foreign affairs.²¹³ This was not unheard of, and constituted yet another way for foreign inhabitants of the cités and their peers to take part in shaping their naturalisation process. Other files of residents bear traces of support by members of Parliament, some of whom made no secret of their willingness to trade influence for votes.²¹⁴ Seeking political help was a long-standing practice of migrants when faced with administrative hurdles. Louis Pirolli's own uncle Agostino, when Louis was still a little boy in his native village, had convinced a French MP to vouch for him as he was facing expulsion from the French territory.²¹⁵

The micro-incentives of naturalisation

Residents were not only able to draw a veil over unpleasant episodes or appeal to powerful backers. They also knew what answers were expected from them. Both the request letters and the forms completed by the police bear common, unoriginal expressions. For instance, Louis Pirolli stated, as reasons for his application, that he was “*fixé définitivement en France,*” that he wished to “*jouir de ses droits civils et*

²¹² APP, CB 92.25, 1927/1622, 17.09.1927; AVP, D1U6 2144, 20.09.1927; FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis and Maria Pirolli. Note that it was not impossible for applicants to volunteer criminal information that the government was not aware of (see e.g. FNA, BB/11/11124, 70451 X 28, Jean Girardi).

²¹³ See chapter 2.

²¹⁴ See FNA, BB/11/10746, 51570 x 28, Joseph Della Valle, Letter from M. Molinié, MP of Aveyron, to the Minister of Justice, 21.1.1929; BB/11/6168, 18385 x 14, Carlo Carlesimo, Letter from Louis Louis-Dreyfus, MP of Alpes-Maritimes, to the Minister of Justice, 15.12.1931; FNA, BB/11/4698, 9356 x 07, Émile Carlesimo, Letter from Émile Carlesimo to M. Bokanowski, 27.11.1927, in which the former replies that he confirms that he will give his vote to the latter, but while reminding him that he has to become a citizen first.

²¹⁵ See chapter 2, note 275.

civiques” and “*donner la qualité de français à ses enfants*,” and that he had no “*attaches en Italie*” anymore, nor any intention to go back.²¹⁶ These motives were stereotypical, and only partly sincere. It is true that Louis did not have much family left in Demanio by the time he applied. And yet in those same years, he started to reinvest the profits of his shop in a house back in the village, and also went there to sign off the inheritance of his father Giacinto, who had died in late 1927. As for the “*vraie patrie*” comment, he was not the only one to use the exact same expression in those years, probably following, at least partially, a practice that was passed within his network of acquaintances when filing the applications.²¹⁷

A statistical look at the answers given by residents to open-ended questions bear the marks of such circulations. They also strongly suggest that the police officers may have helped applicants, whom they knew well, give the correct, expected answer. The vast majority of applications by Alsatian and Lorrainer residents, dating from the late 1870s to the early 1890s, simply mentioned as a motive: “*pour recouvrer la qualité de Français*.”²¹⁸ That reason seemed valid enough for the Ministry. Two young Easterners said they wanted to register for the draft, which was sure to be welcome. Another Alsatian applicant intended to “*se fixer définitivement en France*,” which was to become a widespread leitmotiv of naturalisation forms.²¹⁹ Mentions of “sympathy” or even “love” for France were a small minority in an ocean of standardised answers.²²⁰

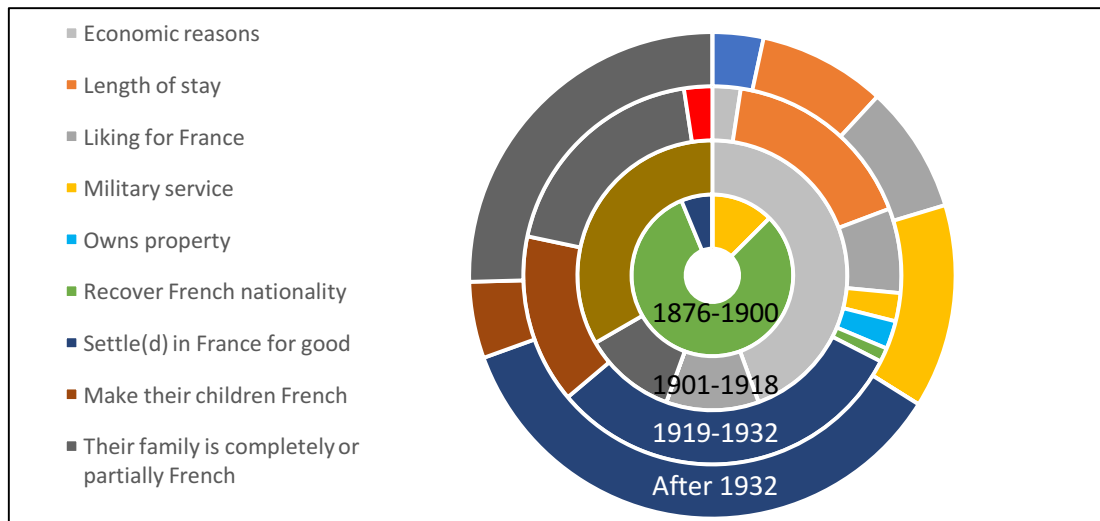
²¹⁶ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis and Maria Pirolli (“established in France for good... citizenship and political rights... ensure his children would be French... no ties in Italy”).

²¹⁷ Unsigned police report [no date, probably 1941], in FNA, BB/11/10553, *Ibid.* Compare with application letters in FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14; BB/11/12583, 33988 x 29; BB/11/12595, 34552 x 29 – (“true fatherland”).

²¹⁸ “To recover French nationality.” 13 out of 17 files that bear mention of the motives of the request, a category that was not filled systematically on the forms in those years.

²¹⁹ “Remain in France for good.”

²²⁰ For a reflection on those stereotypical answers, see Jean-Charles Bonnet, “Naturalisations et révisions de naturalisations de 1927 à 1944: l’exemple du Rhône,” *Le Mouvement social*, No. 98 (1977), 48–50.



*Figure 12: Motives for applying
as mentioned in the residents' naturalisation forms²²¹*

Other answers were even more systematic. More than 99% of residents' files stated that they were unconcerned by politics, and that they had lost all intention of returning to their home country. For over 93%, there was nothing to report from a morality and reputation standpoint. Many of those answers certainly obscured more complex stories. In these conditions, it is hard to probe beneath the surface, and access the deeper motives and incentives of residents.

Based on the most candid answers, it appears that considerations related to military service could be genuinely important on the applicants' side as well. Aside from avoiding the draft in one's own country –and if possible in France as well, by applying late²²²– some applications seemed spurred by a real desire to serve in France. There is little doubt, for instance, over the sincerity in that regard of Louis Chevrier, from

²²¹ Based on 125 files of residents from 1876 to 1952 in which the motives of the application are clearly stated.

²²² Our sample of residents applied on average at 37.5 years of age. A contemporary observer suspected that very reason when noting that most applications were made after 27 years of age (Gaston Dallier, *La police des étrangers à Paris et dans le département de la Seine*, université de Paris, Faculté de droit, Paris: Rousseau, 1914, 117).

No. 100, and Chrétien Lentz, from No. 96; both enlisted for the draft even before becoming French.²²³

Economic reasons were not far behind. Fears of losing one's job in case of an economic downturn was explicitly mentioned in some requests. And though we have not come across, in our particular context, concrete instances of residents being turned away from jobs on account of their foreign nationality, it is possible that this practice did indeed happen at some factories in the Plaine.²²⁴ M. Legras may have occasionally pressured his employees to apply for French citizenship, especially at a time when employing German personnel was not that auspicious. In 1893, he apparently threatened one Alsatian glassworker living at No. 100 to fire him if he failed to recover his French nationality.²²⁵ But that incident remained quite isolated, and an opposing signal is to be found in the management of the housing units that the glass baron had commissioned at No. 133 in 1881 to accommodate his workers. In those buildings, various nationalities coexisted from the 1890s onwards, reflecting –albeit with some delay– the diverse make-up of the factory's personnel.²²⁶

Other naturalisation hopefuls from 96-102 Av. de Paris confessed to being attracted by welfare benefits. In addition to the ones we have already mentioned, the pension for parents of a soldier killed in the war was another benefit reserved to French

²²³ FNA, BB/11/2155, 6602 x 88, Louis Chevrier; BB/11/2475, 9087 x 90, Chrétien Lentz.

²²⁴ For job-related motives to the residents' applications, see FNA, BB/11/2609, 10501 x 91, Chrétien Lienhardt; BB/11/7112, 274 x 20, Joseph-François Rosso. On the relation between naturalisation and foreigners being denied job opportunities, see Jean-Charles Bonnet, "Les Italiens dans l'agglomération lyonnaise à l'aube de la Belle Époque," in Jean-Baptiste Duroselle, Enrico Serra (eds.), *L'Emigrazione italiana in Francia prima del 1914*, *op. cit.*, 100 *sqq.*

²²⁵ FNA, BB/11/2609, 10501 x 91, Letters from Chrétien Lienhardt, av. de Paris 100, to the Justice Minister, 21.09.1893, 25.12.1893.

²²⁶ On the inception of this paternalist project, see FNA, F/12/5190, Légion d'honneur de François-Théodore Legras, 1906. In 1896, four families living there were German, one Belgian; in 1901, three were German, two Belgian. Later on, Casertan and Molisan families would also move in: one glass worker from the Sora area already dwelled at that address in 1908, and there were already six Casertan families in 1921; ten years later, their number had risen to nine, and alongside lived one family from Spain and two from Poland (AD93, 1E66/368, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1908, No. 137; AD93, D2M8 205, Saint-Denis, 1921 Census, 133 av. Wilson; SDMA, 1F33, 1931 Census, 133 av. Wilson).

nationals; it was explicitly referred to by one applicant.²²⁷ Apprehension and uncertainty over one's foreign status should not be discounted either. Alsatians-Lorrainers seem to have been unsettled by the new declaration requirement imposed the decree of 1888.²²⁸ Perhaps because they feared that this could eventually lead to deportation, or bring some form of differential treatment, many decided to recover their French nationality precisely at that moment.²²⁹ Other scholars have pointed out that the mere hope of not being singled out by the police and staying out of trouble was a powerful, though unexpressed, drive of applications for citizenship.²³⁰ One former resident at No. 100 thought of his acquisition of the French citizenship as a way to be "*en règle avec la loi*." As the process lingered, he complained that he was "*très tourmenté*" and might "*avoir des ennuis*."²³¹

In 1927, the passage of a new law on nationality, which made it easier and cheaper to apply, probably convinced a number of residents and their families that the time was right to do so. At the same time, they did not necessarily have strong feelings about it; some may not have felt, up to that point, that the application was worth the effort.²³² Soon enough, nativist considerations caused the insertion of more detailed questions in the administrative forms. The new elements included information on people's health and their degree of integration. The law was also amended to impose restrictions on naturalised citizens. These new Frenchmen, who could already be culturally and

²²⁷ FNA, BB/11/7928, 1592 x 23, Charles Messmer. See Art. 28 of the law of 31.03.1919, which conditioned the pension to the French nationality, in addition to criteria of age (over 60 for fathers and 55 for mothers) and income (the beneficiaries must be too poor to pay the income tax).

²²⁸ See above, note 36.

²²⁹ The director of one of the main societies for Alsatians and Lorrainers clearly saw a link between the new decree and a surge in applications in 1888. Société de réintégration des Alsaciens-Lorrains, *Rapport sur l'exercice 1888*, Paris: Pariset, 1889.

²³⁰ Alfred Sauvy, *Théorie générale de la population*, vol. 2, *Biologie sociale*, Paris: P.U.F., 1954, 331.

²³¹ FNA, BB/11/11367, 82663 x 28, Gélorme ("Jérôme") Pirolli ("legally in order... very tormented... get into trouble.")

²³² On the genealogy and content of the law of 10.08.1927, Jean-Charles Bonnet, *Les Pouvoirs publics et l'immigration dans l'entre-deux-guerres*, Lyon: Centre d'histoire économique et sociale de la région lyonnaise, 1976. For a detailed legal commentary, Eugène Audinet, "La Nationalité française : étude critique de la loi du 10 août 1927," *Revue de droit international privé*, 1928, 1–47.

socially viewed as imperfectly French by their peers, would now be legally denied the rights associated with full-fledged citizenship.²³³

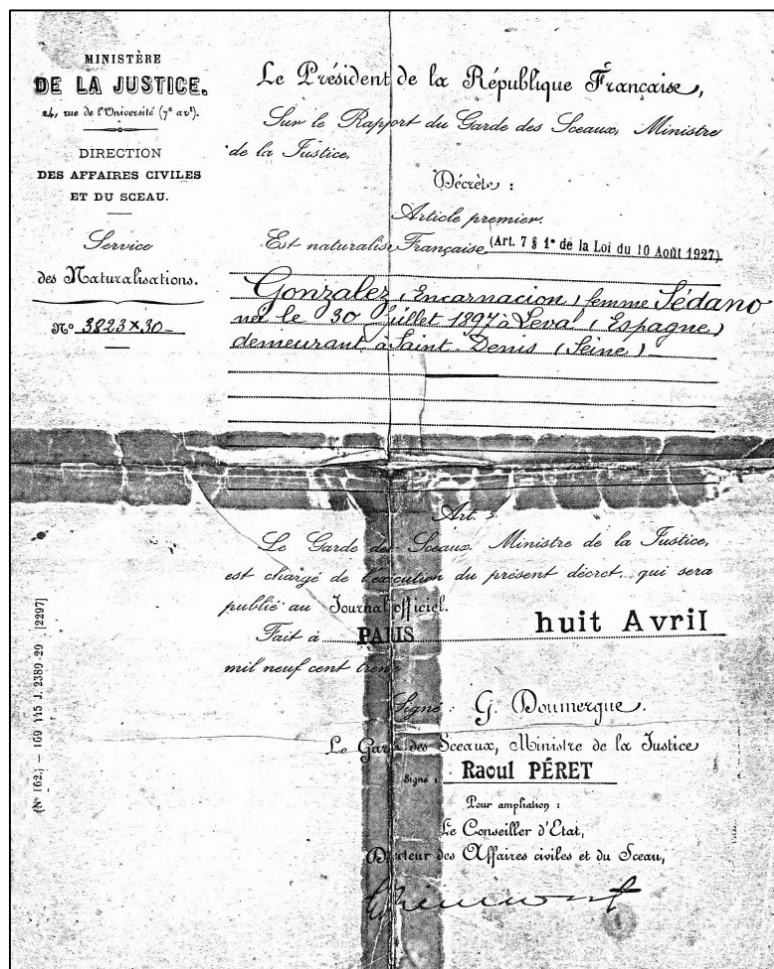


Figure 13: The naturalisation decree of Encarnación Sedano née González, resident at No. 96 Av. Wilson, 8.04.1930

Once again, the case of Louis Pirolli can shed some more light on the process from the residents' standpoint. For Louis, whose early years have been already discussed in

²³³ Laurent Gauci, "Les critères de naturalisation: étude des conséquences de la loi du 10 août 1927 à travers des formulaires de demande de naturalisation (1926-1932)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, Vol. 58 (1999), No. 1, 179-99. See the law of 19.07.1934 denying the access to elected offices, civil service, bar and notary-type functions to naturalised citizens for ten years.

detail, his naturalisation was certainly a natural step. In spite of the stereotypical nature of his application, it is possible that he may have been worried that fascism in Italy, which adopted an anti-emigration stance in 1927, would end up having adverse consequences for his situation in France.²³⁴ It could also be that his senior position at the glass factory reactivated a form of xenophobic resentment on the part of some French workers under his command, even if generic racism remained moderate, especially in the diverse context of the Plaine. A desire to secure his business –the grocery he ran with his wife and daughter– and work positions may have participated in his choice, although the restrictive measures against foreign shopkeepers had yet to be passed at that point. The right to vote may have been yet another incentive for Louis, despite the distance he may have kept, at the time, from any active political involvement. His founding of the mutual benefit society a few years before suggests that he was eager to participate fully in the collective affairs of his community. Lastly, he may simply have wanted to emulate his friends.²³⁵ As for his wife Maria, the gendered character of application procedures renders more difficult to assess the meaning, in her own eyes, of her nationality change.²³⁶ Her grandson hinted that she might have felt more strongly attached to Italy than Louis. But she could speak perfect French as well, was no more a devout Catholic than her husband and, technically, she had been in France for longer.²³⁷

Some scholars have described naturalisation as a sign of the migrants taking root, “the official certificate of integration,” which did not modify, however, the profound feelings of immigrants.²³⁸ That assertion sounds mostly true for the specific cohort of

²³⁴ João Fábio Bertonha, “Emigrazione e politica estera: la ‘diplomazia sovversiva’ di Mussolini e la questione degli italiani all’estero, 1922-1945,” *Altreitalie*, No. 23 (Jul.-Dec. 2001), 39–60.

²³⁵ Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016; FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27; AVP, D1U8 176 and D2U8 300, 14.01.1931, No. 2684. See for an example of childhood friend of Louis’s who filed his naturalisation application in 1926, FNA, BB/11/10387, 33613 x 27.

²³⁶ For an exploration of the gendered aspects of the procedure, see Linda Guerry, *Le Genre de l’immigration et de la naturalisation. L’exemple de Marseille (1918-1940)*, Lyon: ENS Editions, 2013.

²³⁷ Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016.

²³⁸ Laurent Couder, “Les immigrés italiens...,” *op. cit.*, 230.

people at the centre of this dissertation. For a former resident, born in France to Italian parents and whose own children had been born in France and were thus automatically French, it had always been clear that “*ma Patrie, c’est la France*”; her naturalisation only confirmed an existing state of mind.²³⁹ Other individual evidence points to more complex identifications, in which the act of naturalisation took centre stage. A former resident at No. 96, Manuel Arellano, was heard saying after his naturalisation that he was more French than French-born citizens, because as opposed to them, he had chosen to be French.²⁴⁰

Most of the time, nationality changes did not mean severing transnational ties, unless those had been cut off long ago. Louis and Maria Pirolli had been exposed to the French state, and to the French national culture, for a long time. After going back and forth across national borders, they had decided, however, to cross a major legal boundary. This decision is likely to have validated a sense of belonging that was already under way years earlier. The love for France that Louis would profess a few years later as he was stripped of his nationality by the Vichy regime suggests as much.²⁴¹ After becoming a French citizen though, Louis kept returning periodically to Italy. This may paradoxically have reinforced his sense of Frenchness, as he travelled back and forth with a French passport.

On the other hand, the fact that Louis and Maria remained identified as “Italians” in the 1931 and 1936 censuses may suggest either that they did not answer the questions of census officials in person, misunderstood the question as relating to their country of birth, or more probably, were still being identified by concierges and census

²³⁹ FNA, 19770875/184, 18950 x 32, Louise Zangrilli née Jacovissi.

²⁴⁰ Int. Arellano-Ulloa (No. 31), 18.08.2016. For an example of the questions immigrant children could experience in the interwar period when they learned that they had changed nationality, see Monique Rouch (ed.), “*Comprare un prà.*” *Des paysans italiens disent l’émigration (1920-1960). Textes réunis et commentés par Catherine Brisou, Carmela Maltone, Monique Rouche*, Bordeaux: Maison des sciences de l’homme d’Aquitaine, 1989, 337.

²⁴¹ Handwritten letter of Louis Pirolli to the Minister of Justice, 15.04.1942, in FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27.

officials as foreigners regardless of their actual “paper nationality.” After the Second World War, however, when multiple traumatic experiences would have reinforced the importance of their French citizenship –the Exode in May 1940, their son’s captivity in Germany, and their denaturalisation, eventually nullified at the Libération– their French nationality would show for the first and last time on the census registers, shortly before they both passed away.²⁴²

Naturalisation marked a moment of reckoning in the evolving relationship between residents of the cités and the Nation-States, to which migrants had various degrees of allegiance. Another of those critical junctions, which has already been discussed from different angles, was a collective one: the Great War.

4.3. Citizenship in wartime

Crossing national borders

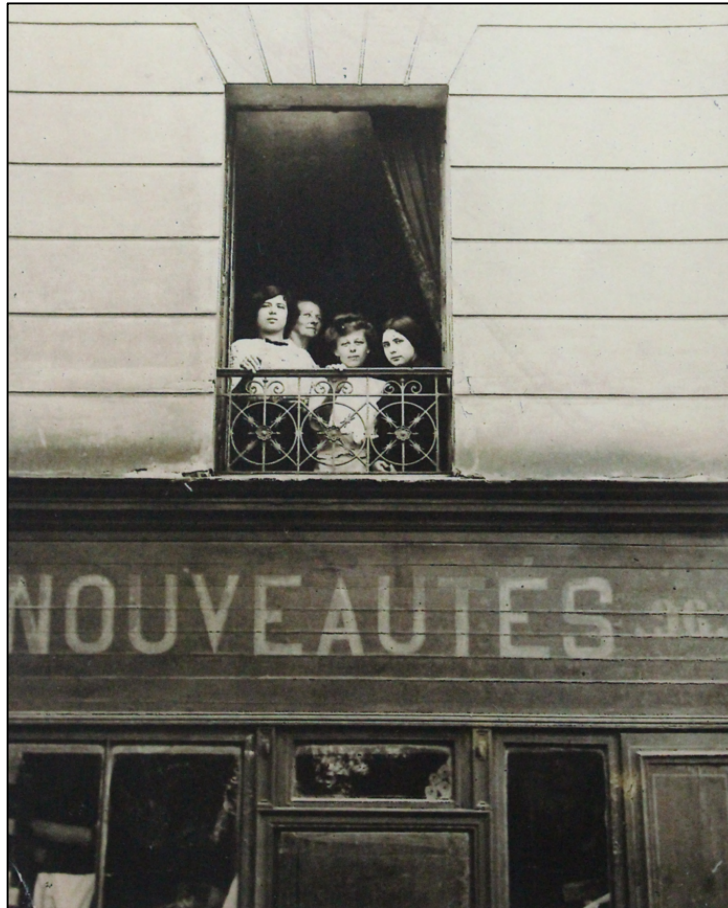
From the outset, the Great War was experienced by residents through the prism of nationality. The departures of French and Belgian men to the army had a unmistakable national component. From the other residents’ point of view, it was the first time that being a foreigner actually translated in such a massive difference, and a favourable one at that.

Civilian migrations, by contrast, were not reserved to any particular group. By mid-September 1914, more than 2,000 free or half-priced train tickets had been issued by the municipal authorities to people in Saint-Denis who could not afford them.²⁴³ The concerns over the military situation and the economic disruption were shared among

²⁴² SDMA, 1F33, 1F35, 1931 and 1936, Census, 4 imp. Trézel.

²⁴³ See *L’Émancipation*, 12.09.1914; Saint-Denis Municipal Archives (SDMA), 4H3/4, Letter of the Head of the Chemins de fer de l’Etat to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 12.08.1914.

residents. An inhabitant of No. 100, Mme Greco, would later testify that she had returned to Italy because she had “feared the German invasion.”²⁴⁴



*Figure 14: Barbe Sommer née Engelmann (second from left),
in her apartment at No. 96 Av. de Paris, late 1914*

The homecoming, for foreigners, was more national than it had ever been. Before that, whether national institutions had provided help or not, occasional “repatriations” had been private and individual affairs.²⁴⁵ Now multiple trains, some entirely paid for

²⁴⁴ AD93, 4U7/723, Justice de paix du canton de Saint-Denis, jugements civils, 1916 (3), 27.10.1916, Veuve Gréco c. Lutel.

²⁴⁵ See SDMA, 1 I 12, Letter from the Mayor of Saint-Denis to the Head of the 4th bureau of the Préfecture de Police, 7.08.1895, about Mme Brulez, 100 av. de Paris. On the repatriation of Spanish emigrants before the Great War, see Narciso Noguer, “Desventuras del emigrante español,” *Razón y fe*, Vol. 23 (1912), No. 1, 4–20.

by the embassies and reserved for the indigents, were bound for Spain and Italy, after an initial halt of traffic in early August.²⁴⁶ In those trains, they were no French travellers, only fellow nationals. Clues suggest that a number of current and past residents took advantage of these opportunities.²⁴⁷ In addition, in Italy as in Spain, state-backed committees raised funds to help returning migrants reach their hometown.²⁴⁸

The French authorities, who needed to devote nearly all the railway system to military purposes, soon stopped subsidising tickets to the needy.²⁴⁹ Foreign residents who remained in the cités were either too poor, deterred by the impossibility of taking their furniture with them, or had ties in France too strong to sever.²⁵⁰ By early October, as the last ones left, the first were already thinking of coming back. Angel Greco, who had left in August, was already back in December.²⁵¹ As for Louis Pirolli, he and his family had all retreated to Pozzilli in September. But Louis made his way back quickly, and was already at his post at Legras in March 1915 in Saint-Denis, without his wife nor his children.²⁵²

²⁴⁶ On the general situation for Spaniards and Italians, see Gaziel, *Diario de un estudiante: París 1914*, Barcelona: Dièrensis, 2013 (transl. from catalan by José Ángel Martos Martín), 289–90; Giovanni Gesare Majoni, “Relazione sull’opera svolta dal Commissariato a tutela delle nostra emigrazione in conseguenza dello scoppio della guerra europea,” 36, in Archivio centrale dello Stato (ACS), *Min. interno, Dir. gen. p. s., Div. polizia, Div. polizia giudiziaria*, fasc. 11900.a, 1913-1915.

²⁴⁷ See for Italians, chapter 2, note 34. For Spaniards, see Marcelino Sánchez, on figure 4, chapter 2; Hermenegildo Saíz (APP, CB 92.15, 1918/1064, 24-29.09.1918).

²⁴⁸ See Archivo histórico de las Merindades, Villarcayo, Spain, sig. 1597, “Antecedentes de la suscripción de carácter nacional para socorrer a los repatriados con motivo de la actual guerra europea. Agosto de 1914”; *El Castellano. Diario católico*, 10.08.1914, 13.08.1914, 19.08.1914, 28.08.1914, 22.09.1914; ACS, *Min. interno, Dir. gen. p. s., Div. polizia, Div. polizia giudiziaria* fasc. 14800.A, “Vitto e alloggio a indigenti, rimpatrio dalla Turchia, rimpatrio dall’estero a causa della guerra (per provincia),” 1913-1915.

²⁴⁹ SDMA, CT225, Letters from the Consul general of Italy to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 18.08.1914, 27.08.1914, 6.09.1914, 10.09.1914; and AGA, sig. 54/5.932, Subsecretaría 5, 1914, No. 5, Letter from P. Balaguar to the Spanish ambassador in Paris, 4.09.1914.

²⁵⁰ The Italian ambassador in Paris affirms in June 1915 that the Italians that had stayed in Paris in the Fall of 1914 were about 15,000 and were the “most needy”: ACS, *Min. interno, Dir. gen. p. s., Div. polizia, Div. polizia giudiziaria*, 1913-1915, fasc. 14800.a, “Reale Ambasciata di Parigi,” Letter from the Italian ambassador in Paris to the Presidente del Consiglio, 2.06.1915.

²⁵¹ FNA, BB/11/9615, 23796 x 26, Angel Greco.

²⁵² See FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, “Date et numéros d’immatriculation” (law of 8.08.1893): 17.03.1915, Paris, 104/28.

Louis's parents stayed longer in the village. The consequence was that they had to go through a more demanding procedure than their son to be allowed back in France. Now the passport for foreign destinations was compulsory, as was the pre-approval of the high authority controlling Italian emigration, the *Commissariato generale dell'Emigrazione*, and the visa of the French consulate in Naples.²⁵³ To secure a visa, Louis's father carried a letter from Legras certifying that he had a work position waiting for him in Saint-Denis (see figure 15). Mobility was more regulated, and the intervention of national institutions encroached on more and more aspects of the migrants' lives.

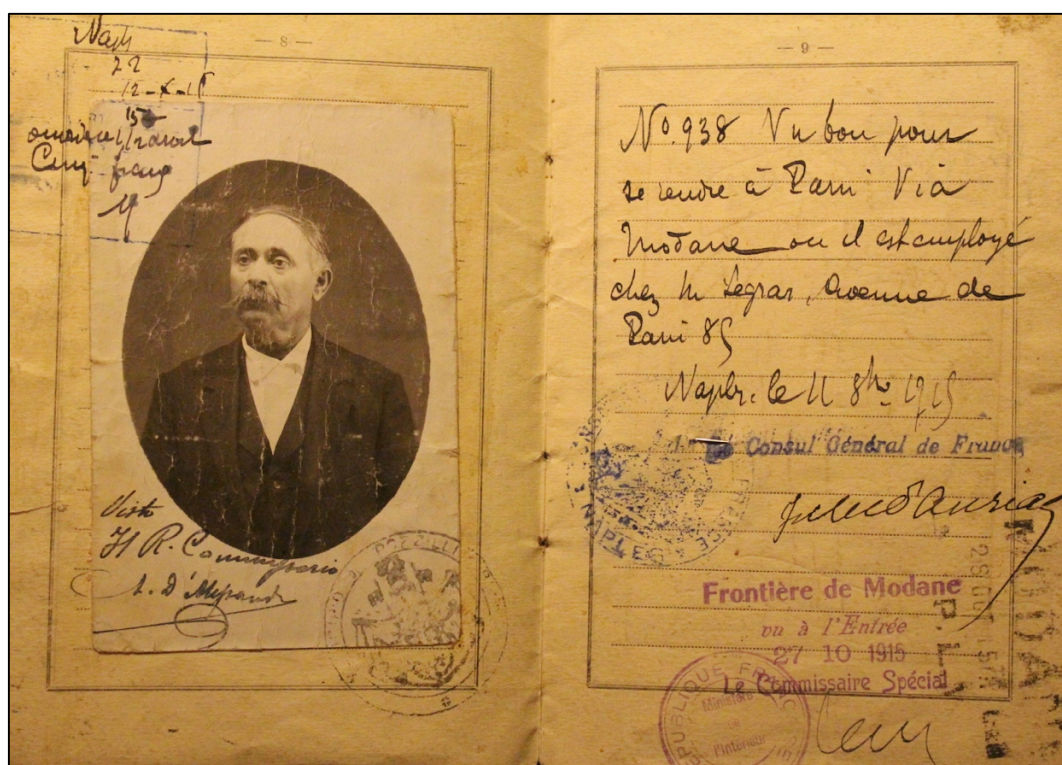


Figure 15: Giacinto Pirolli's passport, issued in Isernia, 27.09.1915

²⁵³ Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016; APP, CB 92.15, 1918/395, 11.04.1918. On Article 2 of the Decree of 2.05.1915 modifying the Decree of 21.01.1901, see Ernest Lémonon, *L'Après-guerre et la main-d'oeuvre italienne en France*, Paris: Félix Alcan, 1918 (4th ed.), 54–5.

Archival traces suggest that returning families of residents had similar experiences across France and Europe. They went back to work in agriculture as they had before their migration, only to wait for an opportunity to go back to Saint-Denis.²⁵⁴ There were certainly local differences, in particular with regard to the urgency people felt to try and travel back to the Plaine. Factors could diverge in that respect. In the Cassino-Sora area, for instance, the heavy damage caused to the region by an earthquake in January 1915 may have made the re-emigration even more necessary.²⁵⁵

Crossing national boundaries

During the war, national boundaries could be experienced in other ways than border crossing. First, a number of Italian and Spanish residents decided to join the Foreign Legion.²⁵⁶ Aside from a genuine sympathy and enthusiasm for the French cause, the decision to enlist was based on various motives.²⁵⁷ The automatic protection against any potential deportation for the légionnaire's family must have crossed people's minds. All the more so since they could have heard of Italian-speaking families being forcibly removed from the Plaine.²⁵⁸ Deportation and denaturalisation eventually spared the cités during the First World War, but some inhabitants may have dreaded these eventualities.²⁵⁹ Also, it was soon known that the family of foreign volunteers

²⁵⁴ Add refs. The experience of these "suspended migrants" has not been studied so far.

²⁵⁵ AS Frosinone, b. 565, "Edifici danneggiati dal terremoto nel circondario di Sora," 24.11.1917.

²⁵⁶ We know of at least four inhabitants of the cités who did: Costantino Gio Batta Orsi (FNA, BB/11/11264, 77542 x 28), Feliciano Sedano (FNA, BB/11/12897, 3823 x 30), Giolormo Pirolli (FNA, BB/11/11367, 82663 x 28), Rodriguez Mateos (SDMA, 4 H 1/2587, Fallen soldiers, 1914-1918, "Mathéo"); SDMA, CT209, "Disparus. Guerre 1914-1918," 24.06.1916; AD93, 1E66/388, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1921, vol. 2, No. 1298, transcription d'un jugement du 4.08.1921 par la Chambre du Conseil du Tribunal civil de la Seine, 9.05.1915).

²⁵⁷ On Italians, see Stéfanie Prezioso, "Les Italiens en France au prisme de l'engagement volontaire : les raisons de l'enrôlement dans la Grande Guerre (1914-1915)," *Cahiers de la Méditerranée*, No. 81, "La Grande Guerre en Méditerranée" (2010), 147-63.

²⁵⁸ See chapter 3.

²⁵⁹ We found only one denaturalisation procedure targetting a former inhabitant of the cités, who had been born in German Saarland. The procedure was dropped after no incriminating element could be found (FNA, BB/11/4456, 1564 x 06, Philippe Steinmann). By contrast, revisions of naturalisation undertaken during the Second World War would result in the denaturalisation of one current resident

would be entitled to the same benefits as families of French soldiers.²⁶⁰ At a time of sudden and massive unemployment in the Summer of 1914, this was certainly not a minor aspect to consider.

Once Italy entered the war, the French government agreed to return the Italian soldiers to its ally. In the Spring of 1915, the so-called Garibaldi regiment of the Foreign Legion was disbanded. Some residents did follow the orders from the Italian army, and went on to fight on a second front, under a second uniform. Others were less inclined to do so. A former resident who had been serving in that regiment had initially placed his hopes in a naturalisation request, filed a few months earlier. But he ultimately decided to withdraw it. He had seen enough in the first months of the war – he had himself been injured, and the Garibaldians had suffered over 25% of casualties – and had no intention of serving further for France. As for Italy, he figured he would simply dodge the draft, which he did. But then, after the war ended, he changed his mind again, and confirmed his intention of becoming French.²⁶¹

On the face of it, some Italian, French, Spanish or Belgian families in the cités could feel on an equal footing, as their husbands and sons were fighting for the Allies, no matter in which army.²⁶² But the casualty rates on the Italian and French fronts soon proved very dissimilar. When for the first time – apparently – an Italian resident lost his son in 1917, his French neighbours had already borne the brunt of the war toll. There had been at least five deaths in the cités in the first six months of the war.²⁶³ At No. 96,

(FNA, 19770904/174, 103514 x 41, Édouard Barquin) and of several former inhabitants of the cités, like Louis Pirolli.

²⁶⁰ *L'Émancipation*, 29.08.1914.

²⁶¹ FNA, 9356 x 07, BB/11/4698, Émile Alphonse Carlesimo.

²⁶² International agreements provided that the children of Belgian immigrants, like two brothers in the cités, would be enrolled in the French Army (Art. 2 of the Franco-Belgian convention of 30.07.1891). See AVP, D4R1 1202, 1901, No. 4133; D4R1 1726, 1913, No. 4505, Vandepontseele brothers.

²⁶³ On the Italian resident who died, the name Jean Baptiste Pirolli, son of Bonaventura; see Emilio Pistilli, *Acquafondata e Casalcassinese*, Acquafondata: Comune di Acquafondata, 2004, 121. The Spaniard is Rodríguez Mateos, already mentioned (see above, note 256). On the French residents, see AVP, D4R1 1101, 1901, No. 1932, Louis Granger; SDMA, 4 H 1/3420, Sommer Joseph; SDMA,

the concierge Barbe Sommer ended up losing three out of four sons (their names are highlighted on figure 16), and the municipal authorities, upon her request, helped her ensure that the last one was sent to a safe assignment.²⁶⁴



Figure 16: A plaque commemorating the alumni of the primary school at 120 Avenue Wilson killed in 1914-1918

Asymmetrical decisions taken by national governments could also fragment the social fabric of the cités and further embed national differences in people's minds. Born in 1899, Louis Carbone was among the “*ragazzi del ‘99*,” the 18-year olds whom Italy decided to enlist in early 1917.²⁶⁵ “Loulou,” as he was called, attended his medical

CT209, “Disparus. Guerre 1914-1918,” Oscar Dubuffet; AVP, D4R1 1612, 1911, No. 4957, Ernest Dubrulle; JSD, 8.3.1915; AVP, D4R1 1669, 1912, No. 5056, Marcel Armand Rocher. Casualties were much higher when taking into account former residents, and also gas victims who died after 1918 (Int. Traoucou, No. 37, 27.06.2016).

²⁶⁴ SDMA, CT177, Letter from Mme veuve Sommer, 96 av. de Paris, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 16.05.1916.

²⁶⁵ Enzo Raffaelli, Lorenzo Cadeddu (eds.), *I ragazzi del ‘99: Il racconto dei diciottenni al fronte*, Udine: Gaspari, 2016. Louis Carbone was the younger brother of Dominique Carbone mentioned in chapter 3.

examination at the Italian consulate in June 1917, was soon declared fit and promptly sent to the front. At the same time, Jules Brulé, a French national and former schoolmate of Loulou's, also living at No. 100 and born only two months later, stayed with his parents, and would not serve until April 1918.²⁶⁶

Other fault lines

The family's national origin proved more important in wartime, but not necessarily decisive. Other distinctions could run athwart differences based on nationality. Undesirability became as much a criterion of foreignness as legal nationality. From 1915 and 1916, those who were being sought and denounced as unwelcome were the "*embusqués*" ("cowards"), detached in factories by industrial necessity, but also by favour or outright fraud.²⁶⁷ In the Plaine-Saint-Denis, a lot of those privileged workers were French, but not all. We know of several Frenchmen living in the cités who were mobilised in factories and bore the distinctive armband of the "*détachés en usine*."²⁶⁸ The management at Legras filed the necessary papers to spare active duty to several of his long-time employees, and had to defend itself against rumours of helping draft-dodgers by sheer favouritism.²⁶⁹

The most significant number of residents in that enviable situation were workers of the *Compagnie du Nord*, the railway company, whether they were long-standing

²⁶⁶ ASC Pontecorvo, liste di leva 1899-1900, classe 1899, No. 20; ASC Pontecorvo, stato civile, births, 1899, No. 214; FNA, BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27; *La Lanterne*, *Le Gaulois*, *Le Petit Parisien*, 27.01.1924; AVP, Military registers, D4R1 2101, No. 5250.

²⁶⁷ See chapter 3.

²⁶⁸ AVP, D4R1 1558, 1910, No. 3822, Victor Muller, mobilised at Legras (his brother Joseph was in the same situation, which suggests a particular protection of the family by the factory's management – see AVP, D4R1 1509, 1909, No. 5477, Joseph Muller); D4R1 1966, 1917, No. 5904, Edgard Gustave Eugène Piers. Some current and former residents were placed in factories because of their age or a medical condition, and were not technically on draft-deferral (see e.g. AVP, D4R1 644, 1891, No. 410, Joseph David Sommer). On the armband, see Delphine Lefort, "L'Après-Première Guerre à Saint-Ouen (1918-1935)," master's thesis in history, University of Paris IV, 1999, 7.

²⁶⁹ SDMA, CT208, Certificate issued by Verreries et Cristalleries Legras, 85 av. de Paris, 16.10.1917, for Dimnet Antoine; Jean-Paul Brunet, *op. cit.*, 191-192; *JSD*, 10.11.1915, 5.12.1915, 12.12.1915.

Plainards or recently arrived refugees.²⁷⁰ From 1915, some Italian workers positioned in factories supplying the French Army, also started to be exempt from service in Italy, by virtue of provisional agreements between the French and Italian governments. As a consequence, their fate was closer to that of the French residents placed in the same situation than to their countrymen in uniform. Not only did these lucky Frenchmen and Italians keep working together, but they became the targets of the same sort of smears, for not being French or Italian enough. One originality of the Plaine-Saint-Denis is that non-nationals could be heard directing those jibes and insults at Frenchmen –policemen and young “*détachés en usine*” alike–, which contributed to redraw the boundaries of belonging and citizenship.²⁷¹

Gender issues also became intertwined with norms of patriotic correctness. The masculinity of those who were not fighting on the front became increasingly questioned from 1916. Boys under 17, the minimum age for a voluntary enlistment, were in principle protected against such insinuations. Masculinity being primarily related to going or not going to war, those who were not old enough yet had to find other ways to subscribe to this model. For a Paris-born resident, Raymond Hatterer, who moved in at No. 98 at the end of the Great War, the conflict started with him seemingly trying to show off his fitness for service. The teenage son of the local baker, he used the courtyard as a place to practice rifle shooting after work.

This may have been a way to temper negative feelings possibly induced by the fairly enviable position of his family. His father’s departure for the front had been deferred because of his baker’s status. Also, as a probable result of his father’s connections with local politicians, Raymond had secured a white-collar job at a local bank, which would

²⁷⁰ AVP, D4R1 780, 1894, 1530 Victor Joseph Barbier; D4R1 879, 1896, 4079, Édouard Isz; D4R1 780, 1894, 1737, Alfred Edmont Jean-Baptiste dit Langlois; D4R1 1202, 1903, No. 4379, Lionel Abrioux; D4R1 1398, 1907, No. 2657, Ludger Edgard Emmanuel Alphonse Piers; D4R1 1613, 1911, No. 5161, Raymond Louis Monnet. For refugee couples whose husband was mobilised at the Northern railway company, see AD93, D7 42–9, Malderez, Duclermortier, Sauvage.

²⁷¹ APP, CB 89.48, 1914/1332, 23.10.1914; CB 92.11, 1915/520, 3.04.1915; CB 92.12, 1915/917, 24.11.1915-7.12.1915 ; 1916/576, 3.07.1916.

have stirred jealousy among his neighbours. Lastly, the youth bore an Alsatian name and very tangible family connections with enemy powers –one of his aunts was married to a German, and one of his uncles had long been an employee at the Austro-Hungarian embassy. Hence the need to act like a man and a patriot as much as possible. Raymond’s eventual departure for the front and his subsequent war injury may have been, in a strange way, the reward for his efforts: his passport to a masculine, militarised, anti-German version of the French citizenship.²⁷²

Discrepancies between residents of the same nationality, even between members of the same family, were not only apparent through uneven exposure to the perils of war. They could also consist in differences in micro-economic conditions. In the fall of 1917, when Paul Carbone –Loulou’s brother– came back from the Italian front for a month of leave in the Plaine, he may have paid a visit to the family of yet another brother of his, Dominique, at No. 100. Whereas Paul’s wife received a daily 1.15-franc allowance as an Italian soldier’s wife, Dominique earned a daily salary of 7 francs at a local metal factory supplying the French military.²⁷³

Other foreigners of the cités did rather well during the conflict, and were not singled out by the authorities. Born in Italy, Maria Giacinta Reale –Umberto’s widow– who now went by the French name of Georgette, took control of the *débit** at No. 96, before selling it to a Greek man.²⁷⁴ Her sister-in-law Angèle, at No. 100, worked at the toy

²⁷² FNA, BB/11/2910, 13770 x 93, Hatterer Marie François Joseph; APP, CB 92.11, 1915/98, 27.01.1915; SDMA, 4H 3/16; SDMA, H40, 1917, and H42, 1919; SDMA, 20C 001-001, 39–41; ASSD, 1E66/377, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1916, vol. 1, No. 283, 19.02.1916; AVP, D4R1 2101, 1919, No. 5479, Roger François Hatterer; D4R1 1966, 1917, No. 5692, Raymond André Joseph Hatterer.

²⁷³ The benefits for Italians were only slightly inferior to their French equivalents, set at 1.25 francs by an Act of 5.08.1914 (Auguste Saillard, Henri Fougerol, *Les Allocations aux familles des mobilisés, réfugiés et victimes civiles de la guerre*, Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1917). But they were insufficient to make ends meet, and some families were authorised to receive the refugee allocation instead (see Jérôme Hervé, “Réfugiés italiens dans le Maine-et-Loire pendant la Grande Guerre,” *La trace. Cahiers du Centre d’études et de documentation sur l’émigration italienne*, No. 14, Dec. 2001, 32). On the Carbones, see SDMA, 4H3/137, Letter from the Director of the Italian Benevolent Society to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 3.11.1917, and reply from the Mayor, 13.11.1917; FNA, BB/11/10387, 33613 x 27; BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27.

²⁷⁴ APP, CB 92.14, 1918/207, 24.02.1918.

factory across the Avenue,²⁷⁵ and amassed a lot of money from suspicious ventures with local *apaches**.²⁷⁶ This sort of accomplishment by residents were not framed in national terms, either by the protagonists or by those who wished them ill.²⁷⁷ At the factory, during the great strikes of May 1918, the people whose arrival was causing discontent were not Italian nor Spanish, but American and Japanese.²⁷⁸ Once again, the national divide between long-time neighbours was counterbalanced by years of familiarity. Lastly, there was another series of issues in which the State would try and impose a national framework over a more complex reality, which contributed to redefining the residents' cognitive boundaries about citizenship. These issues had to do with race, gender and empire.

Race, gender and empire

During the war, the arrival of colonial and Chinese subjects in the Plaine-Saint-Denis was viewed as a challenge by state institutions. The presence of these populations, imported nationwide by the Ministry of War from late 1915, started to be documented in the area in 1917.²⁷⁹ As opposed to “white” foreign workers which the Ministry of Armement was in charge of recruiting –Italians, Greeks, Swedes, Portuguese, Spaniards –the assimilation of the exotic manpower was regarded as neither feasible nor desirable.²⁸⁰ Officially, a paternalistic approach and a humane treatment of the colonial workers was encouraged. Yet one of the main concerns of

²⁷⁵ SDMA, CT158, Director of the N. Clerc factory, List of workers back at work, 17.10.1914.

²⁷⁶ APP, CB 92.15, 1918/607, 4-6.06.1918; CB 92.25, 1927/1596, 15.09.1927.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁸ FNA, F/7/13367, “Compte rendu de la réunion au gymnase municipal de Saint-Denis du 14.05.1918.”

²⁷⁹ APP, CB 92.14, 1917/708, 24.07.1917; CB 92.14, 1917/906, 29.09.1917; AD93, 1E66/379, Saint-Denis, deaths, 1917, No. 1807, 28.12.1917.

²⁸⁰ FNA, 94AP/120, Ministère de l'armement et des fabrications de guerre, Direction de la main d'oeuvre, Section 4 bis, Main-d'oeuvre étrangère, “L'introduction de la main-d'oeuvre étrangère pendant la guerre, et la politique d'immigration,” 12.07.1917, 2. For a general outline of wartime policies regarding foreign and colonial manpower, see Bertrand Nogaro, Lucien Weil, *La Main-d'oeuvre étrangère et coloniale pendant la guerre*, Paris, New Haven (CT): Publications de la Dotation Carnegie pour la paix internationale, P.U.F., Yale University Press, 1926.

public officials and employers on the ground was to prevent, as much as possible, colonial subjects from interacting with the French metropolitan population.²⁸¹ Part of the explanation lay in the fear that enjoying too many freedoms in France could lead indigenous people to demand the same rights in the colonies. That restrictive policy was also grounded in sexual considerations.²⁸²

All colonial subjects were not being treated evenly by the authorities nor by the local population. Racial prejudices, which would hold true for years, contrasted the “brutal mores” of the North-Africans with the docile tranquility of Subsaharian and Indochinese subjects.²⁸³ None of them, in any case, were supposed to gain a pathway to full French citizenship. A story involving a resident of the cités exemplifies the way in which an imperial and racialised understanding of the nation could spark, at the local level, social and cultural questions that had rarely been experienced before in the metropolis, let alone in the Plaine-Saint-Denis.

Born in 1897 in a small village in Tonkin, Indochina, the young Trần Đình Long – who went by the nickname of Năm – had enlisted voluntarily as a military worker when recruitment had taken place in Hanoi. He arrived in mainland France in September 1915. After probably changing places several times, Năm was assigned, in early 1918, to the Plaine Saint-Denis group of Indochinese workers. Accommodated in barracks

²⁸¹ See e.g. FNA, 94 AP 130, “Rapport n° 4 produit par M. l’Inspecteur de 2^e classe des colonies Berrue, au sujet de l’emploi de la main-d’oeuvre kabyle dans divers établissements de l’Artillerie,” 13.06.1916.

²⁸² Marius Moutet, “Un Gros problème. La main d’oeuvre exotique. Ce qu’on en fait, ce qu’on doit en faire,” *L’Humanité*, 7.02.1916; Marc Michel, “‘Immigrés malgré eux’: soldats et travailleurs coloniaux en France pendant la Première Guerre mondiale,” *Historiens & Géographes*, No. 384 (Oct.-Nov. 2003), 341; Mireille Favre-Le Van Ho, “Un milieu porteur de modernisation: travailleurs et tirailleurs vietnamiens en France pendant la Première Guerre mondiale,” doctoral diss. in history, École nationale des Chartes, 1986; Kimloan Vu-Hill, *Coolies into Rebels: Impact of World War I on French Indochina*, Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2011.

²⁸³ For a clear expression of these stereotypes, see e.g. ANOM, 1slotfom/4, Ministère des colonies, Service de contrôle et d’Assistance en France des indigènes des colonies française, Note pour M. le Général, directeur des services militaires, Paris, 13.09.1924.

about 600 meters to the east of the cités, his mission consisted in repairing the damaged railway tracks of the area.

The extent to which these colonial workers mingled with outsiders is not easy to determine. On the one hand, racism and harassment were not absent. On one occasion, one of Nãm's fellow workers was hurt by a stone thrown by an 18-year-old who later confessed that the worker had done nothing to him. Yet we know that Indochinese men, like their North-Africans counterparts, certainly mingled with women.²⁸⁴

In late 1918, Nãm had an affair with a 15-year-old girl, Yvonne. Born in Oise, to the northwest of Paris, she had grown up at No. 98 Av. de Paris. As signs of pregnancy became clearer, Yvonne's mother wrote to the Prime Minister to ask permission for Nãm to marry her daughter. In the following months, the authorities tried their best to discourage the marriage. That stance was inspired by a general segregationist policy, clearly exposed in confidential exchanges among high-level government officials as early as February 1917. Allowing such unions and the subsequent return of the married couples to Indochina, the reasoning went, could harm the prestige of France within the indigenous society.²⁸⁵

As an inspector put it, the indigenes' ambitions to marry French women were spurred by "false ideas on naturalisation," and the hope of increasing their social status in the colony. "*Ils pensent que la présence dans leur famille d'une femme française attirerait une plus grande considération des Français coloniaux ou de leurs*

²⁸⁴ We can deduct as much from the sexually transmitted diseases reported among Indochinese workers of the Plaine-Saint-Denis in ANOM, Islotfom/9, Rapport du Tri-Phu Le Quang Liem Dit Bay au sujet de sa visite dans les hôpitaux de Saint-Denis, du Jardin colonial de Nogent-sur-Marne et de Rambouillet, Paris, 07.04.1919. See also APP, CB 92.11, 1915/564, 18.08.1915; APP, CB 92.15, 1918/208-209, 23.02.1918; CB 92.16, 1919/447, 26-27.06.1919.

²⁸⁵ On the importance and effects of the "politics of prestige" in colonial Indochina, see Emmanuelle Saada, *Les Enfants de la colonie: les métis de l'Empire français entre sujétion et citoyenneté*, Paris: La Découverte, 2007, 71–8.

compatriotes.”²⁸⁶ From the government’s standpoint, those aspirations were fanciful; the imperial conception of the nation implied that colonial subjects remained second-class citizens. They may have enjoyed, in principle, a legal equality to French nationals when it came to marry whomever they wished. And yet they should not be permitted to actually exercise this right in practice. The emergence of a class of mixed-race French citizens –Năm and Yvonne’s children would be French by birth– was something the French authorities were determined to prevent.²⁸⁷

It is in this spirit that the Governor General in Hanoi ordered an inquiry into the material situation of Năm’s family. The report, for which even photographs of the parents were commissioned, was supposed to paint a dire prospect to Yvonne’s family. Năm’s sixty-year-old father owned a small, straw-covered cob and thatch cottage, while his mother earned a meager income by selling “*nưoc ché*” (tea). But what with the life conditions Yvonne’s family was used to in the Plaine-Saint-Denis, or the real bond between Năm and Yvonne, her mother persisted in August 1919. Now, the baby girl was born, Yvonne was an unmarried mother, and Năm had already left the Plaine for a new assignment farther north. Yvonne’s mother maintained her request, but yielded to the government’s persuasion on one crucial point: she conditioned the marriage upon the right for Năm to remain in Metropolitan France at the end of his service. This effectively amounted to an opening for the ministry to torpedo the marriage altogether. Năm was barred from staying; two years later, Yvonne married another man, who recognised the baby child as his.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ ANOM, 1slotfom/9, Note rédigée par M. Nguyen-Van-Vinh, Tri-Phu de Cochinchine, Délégué au Service du Contrôle des Tirailleurs et Travailleurs indochinois en France, 27.05.1918, 18 (“They believe that the presence in their family of a French woman would result in a greater consideration from the part of colonial Frenchmen or of their fellow indigenous subjects”).

²⁸⁷ Emmanuelle Saada, *op. cit.*, 131–6.

²⁸⁸ See ANOM, 6slotfom/7; 1slotfom/1, Confidential letter from René Viviani, Minister of Justice, to the Procureur général, 2.02.1917; APP, CB 92.14, 1918/281, 13-14.03.1918; APP, CB 92.15, 1918/1369, 30.12.1918; AD93, 1E66/280, births, 1919, No. 555; 1E66/281, births, 1920, No. 253; 1E66/341, marriages, 1921, No. 709.

This case illustrates how the offspring of white women were deemed too important to be left under the authority of their colonial fathers, though they legally should have been. It also highlights how racially tinged considerations could be intertwined with a gender and age component. Nãm was not the only one who was prevented from exercising his civil franchises; Yvonne was also frustrated in her plans to choose a spouse, because of her double status as a female and a minor. Had she been a male adult, her lover would have been able to remain in France and become a French citizen. For the first time, colonial definitions of citizenship, with their different tiers of membership according to racial categories, could gain currency in metropolitan locations and disrupt the social like of ordinary people.²⁸⁹ Meanwhile, a baby girl had no ideas of all the issues her birth had raised –nor would she ever reside at No. 98.



Through common and more extraordinary interactions with national governments and local authorities, the inhabitants of the cités on the one side, and Nation-States regulating their social participation and competing for their allegiances on the other, maintained a constant dialogue. Constantly reconfigured by formal and informal decisions on both ends, this relationship was far from a balanced one. It was always the States who had the final say over letting the residents vote, granting them a new nationality, a visa or a free loaf of bread, and sending them to fight in the trenches. Nevertheless, the cases of Gaetano Gabriele, Giustino Pirolli or Yvonne and Nãm show how the rules were constantly resisted and negotiated. The official versions of citizenship had loopholes, and residents had a more fluid understanding of what it meant to belong in the cités, in the neighbourhood, and in society as a whole. Tactics deployed on both sides during naturalisation procedures made the negotiation

²⁸⁹ On the connections between ideas of race and citizenship in the French context, see Ann Laura Stoler, Frederick Cooper, “Between Metropole and Colony,” in *Id.* (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, Los Angeles, Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1997; Laura Levine Frader, “From Muscles to Nerves: Gender, ‘Race’ and the Body at Work in France 1919-1939,” *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 44 (1999), No. 7, 123–47.

sometimes artificial, government officials and migrants alike concealing the real motives for their decisions.

The residents' networks remained paramount in their interactions with public authorities, and often superseded, in the social life, the effect of national differences. Political connections to accelerate a naturalisation, obtain a municipal benefit, or procure official documents for unlawful purposes; contacts at companies that could help avoid being sent to the front or cross international borders in wartime; know-how exchanged with friends, concierges and friendly police officers, in order to give the authorities the information they expected... All of these levers probably constructed as much difference in the cités as the legal notion of nationality, between those who could pull them and those who could not, at any given time.

At the same time, the outcomes of the interactions between the tenants of the cités and the states were sanctioned by a variety of material and biological markers such as passports, forced departures, injuries or even deaths. This created socio-cultural differences which intersected with the daily distinctions emerging from both the residents' spatial movements and their affinity-hostility dynamics. The institutional discourse of belonging and citizenship was a powerful force, not an irresistible one. When it did permeate the micro-context of the cités –always after some degree of diffraction–, that rhetoric contributed to redrawing the boundaries of difference in the residents' lives.

EPILOGUE

The end date of the story told in this thesis, 1932, was an ending neither for the cités, nor for their inhabitants. Both still had a future ahead of them. For the buildings, what lay ahead turned out to be much of the same, and even worse. They kept deteriorating, and yet remained too expensive to repair, and too crowded to demolish. By the start of the Second World War, the sight of No. 100 was more appalling than ever. “*Les murs sont lézardés, les enduits tombent, les scellements des menuiseries et autres [ne] tiennent plus, les planchers menacent de s’effondrer...*” The list compiled by health inspectors went on and on.¹

The bombings of the Plaine-Saint-Denis by the Royal Air Force in 1944 did not help.² On the night of April 21, hundreds of bombs were dropped on the area. One exploded about 40 meters from the cités, blowing the windows and riddling the front buildings with shrapnel. That night, most residents took shelter in the cellar at No. 98. Cautiously emerging the next morning, they were startled by the sight of corpses and dead horses spread over the Avenue.³ Louis and Maria Pirolli’s shop at No. 119 had been entirely destroyed, and what remained of the glass factory was looted.⁴

¹ SDMA, 16AC5, Av. Wilson 100, Letter from M. Lutel and M. Coulon, owners of 100-102 Av. Wilson, to the Mayor of Saint-Denis (“The walls have cracks, the coats are crumbling, the woodwork’s fastenings do not hold anymore, the floors could collapse at any moment...”)

² See “Le bombardement de la Plaine du 21 avril 1944,” in *La Plaine. Il était une fois*, No. 8 (2001), accessible at http://plamemvivre.free.fr/images/les_pdf/num_08.PDF (last accessed 20.09.2018).

³ Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016. 641 people were killed in the bombing, among whom 218 in the Plaine, where 150 more were injured. “Le bombardement de la Plaine du 21 avril 1944,” *doc. cit.*

⁴ AD93, War damages, Second World War, box No. 75, RB4097, Les Fils de Nicolas Clerc; 99, 18E11, Verreries de Saint-Denis; Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016; Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016. At least one former resident was killed in the bombings (AD93, War damages, WWII, box No. 243, RB 21 608 Z, Jean Puzzuoli, 32 rue Bisson; Int. Puzzuoli, No. 18, 21.11.2016).



*Figure 1: Inside the glass factory,
a few days after the bombing in April 1944*

Three months later, the cités were hit once again. On August 25, 1944, the façade at Nos. 100-102 was sprayed with bullets from street combats. The next day, an incendiary bomb fell on No. 104 and caused part of the ceiling at No. 102 to collapse.⁵

Blaming the effects of the bombings, Mme Carbone later complained that the ceiling of her apartment at No. 100 was sagging.⁶ Not long afterwards, the “balcony” would collapse under the feet of her daughter.⁷ Finally, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the remainder of the old constructions at No. 96 and 100-102 were torn down.⁸

⁵ AD93, War damages, Second World War, box No. 90, RB43221, LU, Lutel et Coulon. See chapter 1, figure 20.

⁶ SDMA, *Id.*, Letter from Mme Dominique Carbone to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, no date (received on 20.07.1948). Dominique (Domenica) was the widow of the Dominique (Domenico) Carbone mentioned in chapter 3.

⁷ *L'Humanité*, 10.08.1950. She was not seriously injured.

⁸ SDMA, 16AC5, Av. Wilson 100-102 (see in particular handwritten mentions on the document entitled “Enquête du bureau municipal d’hygiène sur le logement réservé à M. Pirollo Luigi, 9.10.1953).

Over the years, the population of the cités dwindled slowly, as more of their buildings were sealed up or levelled. But its diversity did not wane.⁹ After the Second World War had brought another round of newcomers –including Italian-born GIs who were relatives of former residents and paid them a visit¹⁰– new origins completed the rich demographic history of the cités. For the first (documented) time, the hotel at No. 102 checked in Algerians, Yugoslavians and Englishmen.¹¹

The glass factory, which had managed to withstand the impact of Great Depression, saw its profitability plummet after the war, and production stopped in 1958.¹² As for Mouton, it changed hands several times and struggled in the 1960s, eventually closing in 1971. In the Plaine, the economic downturn started well before the crisis of the 1970s, due in large part to government initiatives in favour of industrial decentralisation.¹³

After the cités were razed, some former inhabitants remained in the area. One of the last to leave, Mme Carbone ended her life in rue Trézel.¹⁴ A woman born at No. 96

Only No. 98, which had been kept, remained standing and is still visible today (SDMA, 2ACW9, Av. Wilson 98, Internal note of the Bureau d'hygiène, 5.06.1963).

⁹ In 1962, there were only 64 people left at No. 96, and 24 at No. 100 (SDMA 1F39, Saint-Denis, 1962 Census, 96-102 Av. Wilson).

¹⁰ Int. Hurez (No. 22), 24.09.2016.

¹¹ SDMA, 16AC5, Av. Wilson 102, Petition from the tenants at No. 102 Av. Wilson to the Mayor of Saint-Denis, 06.12.1949; 1F38, Saint-Denis, 1954 Census, 102 Av. Wilson; 1F39, Saint-Denis, 1962 Census, 96-102 Av. Wilson.

¹² The former Legras factory still had 284 workers in 1939. See Société anonyme des Verreries de Saint-Denis et de Pantin réunies, anciens établissements Legras et Cie, Paris, 6.06.1944, "État numérique du personnel de l'usine," in AD93, War damages, Second World War, box No. 99, *doc. cit.*; BRGM, Basias database, file No. IDF9300040.

¹³ Serge Adda, Maurice Ducreux, "L'usine disparaît. L'industrialisation remise en question. Saint-Denis, Aubervilliers," *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, No. 5 (1979), 27–66; Raymond Guglielmo, "Désindustrialisation et évolution de l'emploi à Saint-Denis," *Villes en parallèle*, No. 11 (1986), 116–33; Alain Bertho, "La Plaine-Saint-Denis dans l'entre-deux," *Projet*, 2008, No. 2, 23–30; Sébastien Radouan, "La rénovation du centre-ville de Saint-Denis aux abords de la basilique: de la Libération au Mondial 98: une modernité à la française," doctoral diss. in art history, University of Paris IV, 2008.

¹⁴ Int. Hohloh (No. 43), 23.04.2016.

in 1925 was still living in rue Proudhon in the 2000s.¹⁵ Others never returned to the neighbourhood, even when they settled only a few kilometers away.¹⁶ Most families lost contact with their former neighbours. But others kept ties for decades, especially children who had grown up together at Nos. 96 and 100.¹⁷

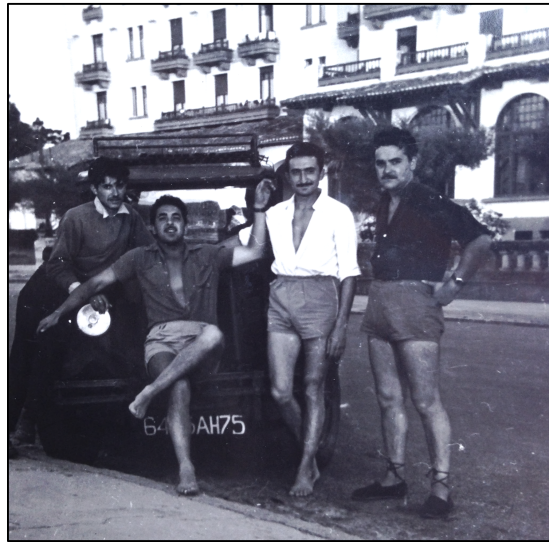


Figure 2: Henri Gonzalez, Angelo Carnevale, Adolphe “Gilles” Arribas and Maxime Gonzalez, on vacation in Biarritz in the 1950s¹⁸

From a socio-economic standpoint, the passing of time brought about change, but not as much as people had hoped. While most of the families we were able to track down saw their material situation improve after the Second World War, the majority of them remain, by their own account, far from well-off. Long-term wealth mobility in France in the 20th century is a puzzling issue on which more research is needed.¹⁹

¹⁵ Antonia Gonzalez, a daughter of Estanislao Gonzalez (Int. Gonzalez, No. 71, 25.07.2018)

¹⁶ Int. Piacitelli (No. 49), 6.07.2016.

¹⁷ Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018, Int. Greco (No.42), 23.04.2016.

¹⁸ The Gonzalez brothers and Gilles Arribas had grown up at No. 96, Angelo Carnevale at No. 5 imp. Chevalier.

¹⁹ Economists started in the 1990s to study intergenerational mobility of wealth. A recent paper on France from 1848 and 1960 highlighted an upward trend in wealth mobility after the First World War, but suggested a negative impact of rural-to-urban migrations (Jérôme Bourdieu, Lionel Kesztenbaum, Gilles Postel-Vinay, Akiko Suwa-Eisenmann, “Intergenerational Wealth Mobility in France, 19th and

Today, former inhabitants and their descendants are far away from the cités. That distance is as much one of time and space, as one made of multiple layers and lapses of memory. Some of the issues we came across in that regard are well-known from ethnographers and oral historians, others less so.

First, we observed that the Second World War largely obliterated the previous stories passed down in families.²⁰ To this day, the residents who resisted, collaborated or were sent to concentration camps are well remembered by their kin.²¹ Moreover, those who have lived long enough to see that period for themselves vividly recall its most traumatic episodes.²² When crucial details of the 1940s were not known to descendants, this was in all likelihood because they had been deliberately concealed by the protagonists. To cite only one example, Louis Pirolli probably never told his children that he had been stripped of his French citizenship in 1941.²³ But details could also be lost or distorted, of course, by the mere passage of time.²⁴

20th Century,” *The Review of Income and Wealth*, 11.10.2017, on-line). For what it is worth, the few descendants of residents who live in the United States seem to have enjoyed a much higher degree of economic success.

²⁰ François Mauriac had noted the substitution, in memories, of the First World War by the second: “*ce que nous appelons encore la ‘Grande guerre’ disparaît sous la marée boueuse de 1940*” (“Race de Corneille”, *Le Figaro littéraire*, 14.12.1957, quoted by Nicolas Offenstadt, *14-18 aujourd’hui. La Grande Guerre dans la France contemporaine*, Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010, 9 –“what we still call the Great War disappears under the muddy tide of 1940”).

²¹ Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016; Int. Arellano-Ulloa (No. 31), 18.08.2016; Int. Gonzalez (No. 71), 25.07.2018. On the deportation of Thomas Sanchez to Auschwitz, see his biography by Claudine Cardon-Hamet on <https://politique-auschwitz.blogspot.com/2011/08/sanchez-thomas.html> (last accessed 04.09.2018). Other deportees included Alphonse and Michel Pelayo, the sons of a couple of residents at No. 100 in the late 1900s (<http://www.bddm.org/liv/recherche.php>), and possibly the shoemaker at No. 100 (Int. Haussy, No. 32, 19.04.2016).

²² Most recall the flight in 1940 and the 1944 bombings as the main events in their lifetime. Also, the hunger and cold suffered under the Occupation are a vivid and painful memory for many.

²³ FNA, BB/11/10553, 41906 x 27, Louis Pirolli.

²⁴ Louis Pirolli’s nephew had always heard that his family came from Venafro, not Pozzilli. According to his cousin’s photo album, the place of origin of the family was Apulia, not Molise. Int. Parravano (No. 52), 28.10.2016; Int. Thomas (No. 51), 31.10.2016.

Second, some of the interviewees were prone to idealise their family's own migration and life choices, compared to later migrants of other origins. Sometimes these claims had a distinct economic aspect, when more recent ethnic groups were blamed, for instance, for the declining value of a family property.²⁵ Similarly, the fondness that many descendants expressed for the "village life" in the Plaine in the 1940s and 1950s also partly romanticises a peaceful, and forever lost, diversity. "*Tout le monde s'entendait bien*," several interviewees said.²⁶ "*Il n'y avait pas d'animosité*," others concurred.²⁷ "*Les Algériens, c'était des bons Algériens*."²⁸

This research has revealed a third, less familiar, aspect: these memory gaps and alterations started at an early date. In 1925, there had been so much turnover in the cités that no one remembered a man who had lodged at No. 100, for several years, two decades earlier.²⁹ Ten years later, the police had no way to check the accuracy of the account another former resident, who claimed he had worked at Legras as a child before the First World War. The factory had made sure its rolls bear no memory of illegal child work.³⁰

For others who had resided in the cités as children, that part of their life receded from their own memory, when it was not deliberately kept secret.³¹ The accuracy of recollections could also vary between members of the same families. Thirty years after the fact, one of the Carbone brothers failed to remember his stay in rue Curial, in Paris, before moving to the cités. Another, despite being the eldest, had forgotten the family's passage in yet another street nearby. Dominique Carbone, for his part, could recall

²⁵ Int. Luengo (No. 40), 21.08.2016. Natacha Lillo had already noted this point. See Natacha Lillo, "Coexistence des migrants," *Projet*, special issue, April 2008, 51–8.

²⁶ Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016; Int. Hohloh (No. 43), 23.04.2016; Int. Hurez (No. 22), 24.09.2016. ("Everybody got on.")

²⁷ Int. Bour (No. 19), 14.09.2016; Int. Lorino (No. 14), 30.09.2016. ("There was no hostility.")

²⁸ Int. Greco (No. 42), 23.04.2016. ("The Algerians were good ones.")

²⁹ See FNA, BB/11/6172, 18503 x 14, Paul Fraioli.

³⁰ See AVP, D2U8 390, Dossier d'assises, Lopez Rufo, *doc. cit.*; for another example, see FNA, BB/11/8141, 12218 x 23, Francesco Ranaldi.

³¹ See FNA, 19770876/18, 25377 x 32, François Salvatore; chapter 2, p. 57 (Giustino Pirolli).

both.³² When the son of Spanish immigrants showed his daughter around in the 1960s, he was not quite sure whether he had been born at No. 96 or at No. 100.³³

As intricate as it is, the residents' memory was not the only source of interference in our investigation. All the public information recorded on paper was also the result of a production, and hence of a distortion. It provides mere versions of what happened, and never grants access to the elusive –some would say illusory– reality of the past, which can be reconstructed but never recovered. By contrast, what does not need reconstruction (at least in the material sense) is the small bit of cités that is still standing today. The building at No. 98, owned by a public housing company, underwent repair works in 2017-2018, extending its life into the near future. We can only invite our readers, if they ever pass by, to stop and look. And, why not, ask locals for a few memories.



Figure 3: The façade of No. 98 Av. Wilson, May 2018

³² FNA, BB/11/10387 33613 x 27, Paul Carbone; BB/11/13261, 22005 x 30, Antonio Carbone; BB/11/10398, 34199 x 27, Dominique Carbone.

³³ Int. Arellano-Ulloa (No. 31), 18.08.2016.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this study, several points need to be stressed. The first one is that none of the inhabitants of the cités were famous figures, and they barely ever met any.³⁴ They were not even the forgotten or silent heroes of anything.³⁵ The point of this research was never to emphasise, or somehow rehabilitate, its protagonists' historical importance. From this sort of ambition has emerged research of great quality and quantity, and still does. And yet this was not, and could not be, the perspective of this particular investigation.

On their own, the residents at Nos. 96-102 Av. de Paris did not play any major social, political, economic or cultural role. Save for a few child-importers and a handful of local elected officials at very isolated moments, they did not wield influence outside of their own social networks. Besides, their trajectories are not supposed to be viewed as exemplary of lower-class migrants in Paris at the turn of the 20th century. Rather, they make up one, diverse sample of people –and a rapidly changing one at that– whose particular experiences can inform and expand our understanding of what was possible at the time, in that place, under those circumstances. Whether others were

³⁴ Aside from the famous names already referred to in connection with the Vozza scandal (the future Italian president Luigi Einaudi; the former queen of Naples Maria Sofia von Wittelsbach; Georges Poujouly, who starred in the 1955 film inspired by the episode), the inhabitants of the cités crossed paths with a few other “VIPs” over the years. Pierre Laval, the future mayor of Aubervilliers and Prime Minister in the 1930s and under the Vichy regime, served as counsel for the *Comité de protection de l'enfance*, the organisation that took legal action on behalf of the Spanish children against Varona and the other padrones in late 1912. A few years later, Laval became the attorney of a resident at No. 100, César Remigio Iglesias (AVP, D2U6 198, Procureur de la République c. César Remigio Iglesias, José Gonzalez, José Jesús Hocès de la Guardia, 10.01.1918). They also corresponded with Jacques Doriot, or at least his staff, during his tenure as Mayor of Saint-Denis in the 1930s, and some may have known him in person from the time when he organised meetings in factories in the mid-1920s. According to interviewees, the boxing champion Marcel Cerdan was seen a couple of times in the bistro at No. 102 in the 1940s. Lastly, a Franco-Italian motion picture by Jacques Baratier, called *La Poupée* (1962), contains a scene that was shot at No. 100 in 1961. Some residents remembered vividly the day of shooting and the presence of the film crew in the courtyard (Int. Verrecchia, No. 39, 4.09.2016). Unfortunately, barely any detail is visible aside from a staircase to the left of the entrance passage.

³⁵ See Sherri Greene Ottis, *Silent Heroes: Downed Airmen and the French Underground*, Lexington (KY): University Press of Kentucky, 2001; Stanley Cloud, Lynne Olson, *Question of Honor. The Kosciuszko Squadron: Forgotten Heroes of World War II*, New York (NY): Vintage, 2004.

in similar situations and made the same choices was outside the purview of this research.

On the other hand, the lesson of microhistory is that the residents were not mere pawns buffeted by the great currents of history. They played their full part in the collective configurations that mattered to them. In the apartments and in the courtyards, at the factory, the wash house and the *débit*, they constantly acted and interacted with others. Thereby, they contributed to shape and define the parameters of their individual experiences.

These experiences were inseparable from the place in which they happened. Both the evolution of the residents' life settings and the changes in people's physical location were not exogenous, passively received phenomena. On the contrary, the first part of this study has highlighted the contingency of these processes, and the role residents played in moulding their life conditions, and construing their own representation of space and mobility. Always cultural, their sense of place depended on a variety of intertwined criteria: what the buildings looked like, sounded like, smelled like; how they were connected to their surroundings; who else lived there; what sort of joys or grief the neighbours and oneself were going through. As for the residents' migration decisions, they were influenced by resources, networks, and circumstances, and in turn altered and reconfigured those very parameters. An episodic and contingent enactment of ethnicity, gender, class or age differences was often among the causes, and the consequences, of the residents' many migrations. And even when they were not on the move themselves, the spatial movements of others could significantly affect their identifications. The level of granularity of the migration stories followed by this study –the Pirollis' trajectory in particular– allows to substantiate these points with a degree of precision and complexity generally unheard of at the macro level.

Changes of, and between, places, were combined with the constant interactions with others. As the second part of this dissertation has shown, these others could be people and institutions. With the former, the residents' relationships were always diverse, and not over-determined by one single category of difference. When they were based on common geographic and cultural origin, affinities tended to bring together people from micro-regions, and not broader territories –with the possible exception of Spaniards, whose relationships to their fellow nationals often extended beyond their strict area of origin. As for hostilities, they could at times feed off perceived differences in ethnicity or race, but were rarely triggered by them, as opposed to more mundane considerations, and more idiosyncratic characteristics that could put people in opposition to each other. This conclusion, which proceeds from qualitative and quantitative evaluations rarely attempted before at that level of detail, offers one counterpoint to the overarching narratives of migration history, according to which the ethnicisation of migrants took place along national lines and interethnic violence was primarily fuelled by racism.

In addition, this thesis has demonstrated that with both hard and soft power, States competed for the residents' allegiances, and citizenship was never a foregone conclusion. Rules could be flouted, policies resisted, procedures circumvented. Divided loyalties and changes in nationality showed that residents could carve out their own path in between and across national boundaries. All the same, identification papers, administrative decisions and military orders could deprive people from the freedom they had hoped for, and leave visible, sometimes indelible, national divides running through the courtyards of the cités. These delineations provided an important, though not exclusive, symbolic repertoire for dynamics of solidarity and hostility by which the residents constantly rearranged their social life.

Migration history is now part of a global field of study, well on its way to complete mainstreaming. With the recognition of a cross-cutting topic often grows the appetite

for a cannon, a grand narrative with its share of authoritative statistics. This thesis, narrated from the peephole of one tiny fraction of territory and population, should give pause to those hoping for a definitive account of migration, integration or racism. By making room for counter-intuitive stories and non-linear evolutions, the only gospel it attempts to preach is one of critical circumspection. Today, migration often elicits ready-made and dogmatic responses. Brandishing the values of nuance and caution and holding them dear is something from which academic research cannot afford to shy away.



Figure 1: A coffee cup from the Plaine-Saint-Denis glass factory, early 20th century

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 - Girls’ school, “Registre matricule des élèves admis à l’école à partir du 4.11.1924.”

Archives of diplomatic missions

- Spanish General Consulate in Paris: births (1909) and marriage transcriptions (Vol. IV-V).

Private archives

- Fédération d’Associations et Citoyens Espagnols en France, FACEEF (10, rue Cristino-Garcia, Saint-Denis):
 - “Archivos – El Hogar de los Españoles,” 1925-1959.

Italy

Municipal archives

- Acquafondata
 - “Registri della popolazione,” 1911, 1945; “Schede individuali.”
 - RGN, “Regno d’Italia”: “elenchi dei poveri” (RGN 9–11); “emigrazione, immigrazione” (RGN 41); “liste di leva” (RGN 19–25).

- Pozzilli

- “Stato civile,” 1850–1930.

- “Liste di leva,” 1885-1892.

- B. 13, "Catasto fabbricati."
- "Fogli di famiglia," 1890-1960.

- Casalvieri
- "Stato civile."

- Rocca d'Arce
- "Stato civile."
- "Registro di popolazione."
- "Schede individuali."

- Arpino
- "Stato civile."
- B. 180, cat. XV, fasc. 12, "Mentecatti"; fasc. 14, "Oziosi, vagabondi, rimpatriati."
- "Registro della popolazione," 1800-1900.

- Pontecorvo
- "Stato civile."
- "Leva. Ruoli," 1881-1910.

Provincial archives

- Archivio di Stato, Roma
- "Tribunale penale e civile di Roma": b. 4100, fasc. 28765.

- Archivio di Stato, Isernia
- "Sottoprefettura di Isernia," "Atti di Polizia" (11-39-1868, 11-19-1868, 11-13-1868, 10-42-1868, 12-6-1880, 12-7-1880).
- "Tribunale di Isernia" II (b. 223, fasc. 19).

- Archivio di Stato, Frosinone
- "Sottoprefettura di Frosinone": Roccasecca, 1894 (b. 265).
- "Prefettura di Frosinone": emigrants (b. 533, 554 bis, 571, 612), 1915 earthquake (b. 501, 565), child labour in glass factories in France (b. 565 bis), criminal gangs (b. 573), municipal affairs (b. 3, 71, 123, 429, 443, 495).

- Archivio di Stato, Caserta
- "Corte d'assise di Cassino": individual cases (b. 119, No. 510; b. 128, No. 552; b. 164, No. 740; b. 52, No. 230; b. 101, No. 427; b. 160, No. 716).
- "Prefettura, Gabinetto": emigration (b. 22, No. 213); municipal affairs, Casalvieri (b. 138, No. 1477; b. 149, No. 1562); Acquafondata (b. 148, No. 1546; 156, No. 1618; 249, No. 2550); Reports on the circondario of Sora, 1899-1902 (b. 303, No. 3442, 3450; b. 304, No. 3455; b. 304, No. 3458).

National archives

- Archivio centrale dello Stato
 - Ministry of the Interior, “Direzione generale della Pubblica sicurezza, Divisione Polizia”: “associazioni in Italia e all’estero”, 1912-1945 (b. 1); “affari generali di polizia giudiziaria,” (b. 39); emigrants (b. 85-86, 91, 113, 166, 190, 820; old Nos. 96, 291); “Reati. Avvenimenti.” (b. 177, 224).
 - Ministry of the Interior, “Direzione generale della Pubblica sicurezza, Divisione Affari generali riservati”: Ordine pubblico, Caserta, 1914 (b. 15).
 - Ministry of the Interior, “Direzione generale della Pubblica sicurezza, Divisione Polizia giudiziaria,” 1919-1921 (b. 1400, 1363).
- Archivio storico diplomatico
 - Italian embassy in Paris, 1896-1919 (b. 16-26).
 - “Commissariato generale all’Emigrazione” (b. 30, 46-7).
 - Affari Politici, P, 1891-1916: Italians in France (p. 572, 619).
 - Archives of the Ministry’s personnel: Armao Ermanno, Vice-Consul in Marseille, 1915-1917 (b. 385/884).

Spain

Municipal archives

- Archivo histórico de las Medindades, Villarcayo (Burgos)
 - Repatriations, 1914 (sig. No. 1597).
- Merindad de Sotoscueva (Burgos)
 - Births, marriages, deaths, 1880-1910.
- Merindad de Valdeporres (Burgos)
 - Births, marriages, deaths, 1893-1935.
- Valle de Valdebezana (Burgos)
 - Births, marriages, deaths, 1873-1911.
- Mesas de Ibor (Cáceres)
 - Births, marriages, deaths, 1883-1928.
- Navalmoral de la Mata (Cáceres)
 - Leg. 63, “1898-1916: Junta auxiliar de suscripción nacional” (1898).
 - Leg. 100, “Copia del padrón,” 1898-1899.

- Peraleda de la Mata (Cáceres):
- Births, marriages, deaths, 1883-1910.

Provincial archives

- Burgos
 - Audiencia territorial: “sentencias,” 1883-1897 (No. 269), 1900-1909 (No. 270–2); “juicios orales” 1910-1915 (1381/2).
- Cáceres
 - “Interior, Gobierno civil”: Passports, 1924-1943 (GC/1536, 2458:1).
 - “Correspondencia ordenada por pueblos”: Belvís de Monroy, 1924-1935 (GC/2685).
 - “Expediente de responsabilidades políticas contra Ambrosio Luengo Marcos” (JIRP/19:33).
 - “Real Audiencia, Cáceres, Sentencias,” 1934 (RA-LIB, 328:L768).
 - Tribunal Superior de Justicia de Extremadura, “Desobediencia imputado a Luengo Marcos A.,” 21.11.1950 (RA 1540:26).

National archives

- Archivo histórico nacional (AHN)
 - Juzgado de Instrucción del Distrito del Congreso de Madrid: “Infracción de la Ley de Emigración” (FC-AUDIENCIA_T_MADRID_CRIMINAL, 4, Exp. 33).
- Archivo general de la Administración (AGA)
 - Spanish embassy in Paris: children in glass factories, 1905 (54/5.861); “contencioso” (54/5.926, 932, 933); Spanish workers in Saint-Denis (54/5954), “Patronato Saint-Denis, Plaine-Saint-Denis” (54/11001); emigration, 1909-1931 (54/6.072).
 - “Comercio”: emigration (54/1695–6).
 - “Repatriaciones y otros”: 1914-1915 (51/00047, 51/00051).
- Centro documental de la memoria histórica (Salamanca)
 - “Delegación Nacional de Servicios Documentales de la Presidencia del Gobierno, Secretaría General, Fichero de la Secretaría General y de la Sección Político Social, fichero N° 37”: Ambrosio Luengo Marcos.

Private archives

- Archives de la Fundación 1º de Mayo / Centro de Documentación de la Emigración española
 - “El Hogar de los Españoles” (001/001-25).

Other countries (United States, Great Britain):

- Digitised archives only (censuses, immigration records).

2. PRIMARY PRINTED SOURCES

Official publications

- *Bulletin municipal officiel de Saint-Denis*, 1878–1912 (digitised).
- *Bulletin municipal officiel de la ville de Paris*, 1880-1938 (digitised).
- *Journal officiel de la République française, Lois et décrets*, 1880-1978 (digitised).
- *Bulletin des usines de guerre*, 1916-1918.
- *Gazzetta ufficiale del Regno d'Italia*, 1895-1931 (digitised).
- *Gaceta de Madrid*, 1886-1922 (digitised).

Press and periodicals

- Local publications
 - *Journal de Saint-Denis*, 1889-1932 (digitised).
 - *L'Émancipation*, 1902-1932 (digitised).
 - *L'Éclaireur*, 1896-1900.
 - *Le Réveil de Saint-Denis*, 1901-1908.
 - *Le Petit démocrate de Saint-Denis et de la Région*, 1912-1914.
 - *L'Écho des Chaumettes*, 1908-1909.
 - *Le Bonhomme normand*, 1882-1910 (digitised).
 - *El Castellano. Diario católico* (Burgos), August-December 1914.
 - *El Diario de Burgos* (Burgos), August-December 1914.

- National publications

- *Le Matin, La Presse, Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisien, Le Radical, Le Journal, Le XIX^e siècle, La Lanterne, Gil Blas, L'Aurore, Le Figaro, Le Journal des Débats politiques et littéraires, La Petite République socialiste, L'Humanité, Le Soleil*, 1881-1932 (digitised).

- *Le Réveil des verriers (La Voix des verriers)*, 1892-1924.

- *La Stampa*, 1898-1904 (digitised).

- *La Correspondencia de España*, 1912-1914 (digitised).

- Other

- *Bollettino dell'Emigrazione*, 1907-1920.

3. PRIMARY ORAL SOURCES

Below is the list of interviews conducted over the course of this research project. The list is not sorted chronologically for reasons pertaining to the transcripts and recordings of the interviews. The reference number in the first column is quoted in the manuscript's footnote. More information about the interviews and the interviewees (in particular their family connection to the residents at No. 96-102 Av. de Paris), can be found at www.paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "List of interviews."

No.	Starting date	End date	Type	Title interviewee	First name interviewee	Surname interviewee	Country of residence at time of interview
1	2017.01.16	2017.01.27	Mail and e-mail	Ms.	Aurélie	Lacy	France
2	2017.01.16	2017.01.21	E-mail	Dr.	Paolo	Verrecchia	Italy
3	2017.01.16	2017.01.16	E-mail	Ms.	Stévie	Fleury	France
4	2015.03.08	2015.03.09	E-mail	Mr.	Guido	Di Meo	Italy
5	2017.01.15	2017.01.15	E-mail	Mr.	Daniele	Salvatore	Italy
6	2017.01.15	2017.03.18	E-mail	Mr.	John	Rowan	Scotland
7	2017.01.17	2017.02.09	E-mail	Dr.	Massimo	Vitale	Italy
8	2017.01.15	2017.01.28	E-mail	Ms.	Beth	Andaloro	USA
9	2017.01.16	2017.01.30	Mail	Mr. & Ms.	René & Danièle	Herbomez	France
10	2016.11.28	2017.02.03	Mail and e-mail	Mr.	Laurent	Zonfrilli	France
11	2016.04.09	2016.04.14	Phone and e-mail	Mr.	Christophe	Sedano	France
12	2016.09.16	2016.09.16	Phone	Ms.	Corinne	Carlesimo	France

13	2016.11.30	2016.11.30	Phone	Ms.	Andrée	Fourdrignier	France
14	2016.09.30	2016.09.30	Phone	Mr.	Antoine Angel	Lorino	France
15	2016.04.15	2016.04.15	Phone	Ms.	Christine	Le Bozec	France
16	2016.04.17	2016.04.17	Phone	Ms.	Lydie	Bouchard	France
17	2016.04.06	2016.04.06	Phone	Mr.	Bernard	Sommer	France
18	2016.11.21	2016.11.21	In person	Ms.	Jacqueline	Morvan	France
19	2016.09.14	2016.09.14	Phone and e- mail	Mr.	Christian	Bour	France
20	2016.12.21	2016.12.21	Phone	Ms.	Colette	Blancher	France
21	2016.08.01	2016.08.01	In person	Ms.	Corinne	Leo	France
22	2016.09.24	2016.09.24	Phone	Mr.	Daniel	Hurez	France
23	2016.01.13	2016.01.31	E-mail	Ms.	Angela	Gilliot	France
24	2017.02.15	2017.02.15	Phone	Ms.	Joële	Lutel	France
25	2017.02.27	2017.02.27	Phone	Mr.	Frédéric	Heppl	France
26	2016.11.28	2016.12.04	Mail and e-mail	Mr.	Pierre	Gabriele	France
27	2016.07.24	2016.07.24	In person	Ms.	Denise	Besson	France
28	2016.12.02	2016.12.02	Phone	Ms.	Denise	Rongione	France
29	2016.10.21	2016.10.21	Phone	Ms.	Eliane	Gaudron née Clémentz	France
30	2016.08.25	2016.08.25	In person	Ms.	Elvire	Greco née Di Berardino	France
31	2016.08.18	2016.08.18	In person	Ms.	Georgette	Arellano- Ulloa	France
32	2016.04.19	2016.04.19	In person	Ms.	Hélène	Hausy née Mandagot	France
33	2016.09.30	2016.09.30	Phone	Ms.	Irène	Aksouh née Moreno	France
34	2016.07.29	2016.07.29	Phone	Mr.	Jacques	Orsi	France
35	2016.09.10	2016.09.10	Phone	Mr.	Jean	Hertzler	France
36	2016.09.09	2016.09.09	Phone	Mr.	Jean-Louis	Gateau	France
37	2016.06.27	2016.06.27	Phone	Mr.	Jean-Marc	Traucou	France
38	2016.08.02	2016.08.02	Phone	Ms.	Jeannette	Postel née Verrecchia	France
39	2016.09.04	2016.09.04	In person	Mr. & Ms. & Ms.	Henri, Marie Colette, Jeannette	Verrecchia	France
40	2016.08.21	2016.08.21	In person	Ms.	Maria-Luz	Luengo	France
41	2016.07.06	2016.07.06	Phone	Mr.	Pascal	Kuhnmunch	France
42	2016.04.23	2016.04.23	In person	Mr.	Roger	Greco	France
43	2016.04.23	2016.04.23	Phone	Mr.	Marcel	Hohloh	France

44	2016.04.23	2016.04.23	Phone	Ms.	Jeannette	Hohloh née Ricci	France
45	2016.07.06	2016.07.06	Phone	Ms.	Sylvie	Germann	France
46	2016.09.25	2016.11.29	E-mail	Ms.	Régine	Costedoat née Guyonvernier	France
47	2016.11.23	2016.11.23	In person	Mr.	Luc	Federmeyer	France
48	2016.10.21	2016.10.21	In person	Mr.	Guy	Guyonvernier	France
49	2016.07.06	2016.07.06	In person	Mr.	Benoît	Piacitelli	France
50	2016.07.21	2016.07.21	Phone	Mr.	Gino	Rongione	France
51	2016.10.31	2016.10.31	In person	Mr.	Michel	Thomas	France
52	2016.10.28	2016.10.28	In person	Mr.	Jean-Claude	Parravano	France
53	2016.12.05	2016.12.05	Phone	Ms.	Marie-Hélène	Hamadou née Macciardi	France
54	2016.09.14	2016.09.14	Phone	Ms.	Anna	Van Kerkhove née Carnevale	France
55	2016.08.30	2016.09.30	E-mail	Ms.	Joana	Porres	Spain
56	2016.12.01	2016.12.01	E-mail	Ms.	Anna	Gallacio	France
57	2016.11.10	2016.11.22	E-mail	Ms.	Danielle	Gallaccio	France
58	2016.12.05	2016.12.05	E-mail	Mr.	Désiré	Vandepontseele	France
59	2017.02.27	2017.02.27	Phone	Ms.	Micheline	Castelain	France
60	2016.04.04	2016.04.07	E-mail	Ms.	Joëlle	Bobbio	France
61	2016.11.19	2017.04.08	E-mail	Mr.	Claude	Carbone	France
62	2017.07.12	2017.07.13	E-mail	Mr.	Jean-Paul	Jacob	France
63	2017.07.12	2017.11.17	E-mail	Ms.	Maryse	Battista	France
64	2017.08.30	2017.08.31	E-mail	Ms.	Annick	Pascal	France
65	2016.05.17	2016.05.17	In person	Mr.	Emiliano	Ruiz López	Spain
66	2016.05.17	2016.05.17	In person	Ms.	Adela	Martínez Saiz	Spain
67	2016.05.17	2016.05.17	In person	Ms.	Elisa	López	Spain
68	2017.11.05	2018.07.24	E-mail	Ms.	Guy	Scopélitis	France
69	2016.07.22	2016.08.02	Mail	Ms.	Laurette	Greco	France
70	2016.05.21	2016.05.21	Mail	Mr.	Camille	Doerflinger	France
71	2018.07.25	2018.07.25	In person	Mr.	Stéphane	Gonzalez	France
72	2018.02.12	2018.02.25	E-mail	Ms.	Deborah	McAvoy née Friedberg	USA
73	2018.07.04	2018.07.04	E-mail	Mr.	Vincent	Lévy	France
74	2018.07.20	2018.07.22	E-mail	Mr.	Christian	Hugonet	France
75	2018.07.02	2018.07.24	E-mail	Ms.	Michèle	Fraioli	France

3. SECONDARY SOURCES

For greater convenience, the following references are sorted by type (archival directories, bibliographies, published studies, unpublished studies, works of fiction). Published studies are grouped by topic.

- Archival directories:

Archives départementales de Seine-Saint-Denis, *Guide du lecteur: les archives communales et départementales en Seine-Saint-Denis*, Bobigny: Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis/Conseil général-Direction des services d'archives départementales, 1997.

Archives départementales de Seine-Saint-Denis, *La Seine-Saint-Denis, de la campagne à la banlieue: documents de géographie historique du XVI^e siècle à nos jours*, Bobigny: Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis/Conseil général-Direction des services d'archives départementales, 1986.

Archives départementales de Seine-Saint-Denis, *Que lire sur l'histoire de la Seine-Saint-Denis? Bibliographie sur l'histoire du Nord-Est parisien, le département et les communes de la Seine-Saint-Denis*, Bobigny: Département de la Seine-Saint-Denis/Conseil général, Direction des services d'archives départementales, 1999.

Association Génériques, Veglia Patrick, Folliet Delphine (eds.), *Les Étrangers en France: guide des sources d'archives publiques et privées: XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, Vol. IV, Paris: Génériques, 2006.

Bastien Hervé, *La France contemporaine (XIX^e-XX^e s.). Méthode pratique pour la recherche historique*, Paris: Masson, 1995.

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Beckett Ian, *The First World War: The Essential Guide to Sources in the UK National Archives*, Richmond: Public Record Office, 2002.

Borgé Jacques, Viasnoff Nicolas, *Archives de la banlieue parisienne*, Paris: Michèle Trinckvel, 1994.

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Delsalle Paul (ed.), *La Recherche historique en archives, XIX^e-XX^e siècle*, Paris:

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- Dreyfus Michel, *Les Sources de l'histoire ouvrière, sociale et industrielle en France aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles. Guide documentaire*, Paris: Éditions ouvrières, 1987.
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- Dupuis Quentin, Folliet Delphine, Sagatni Tatiana, Veglia Patrick (eds.), *Histoire et mémoires des immigrations en région Île-de-France: inventaire des sources* (2 vol.), Paris: Génériques, 2008.
- Folliet Delphine, Veglia Patrick (eds.), *Île-de-France. Sources*, Paris: ACSÉ, 2005.
- Fourcaut Annie (ed.), *Un Siècle de banlieue parisienne (1959-1964): guide de recherche*, Paris: L'Harmattan/CNRS, coll. "Villes et entreprises", 1996 (2nd ed.).
- Henriot Gabriel, La Monneraye Jean de, *Répertoire des travaux publiés par les sociétés d'histoire de Paris depuis leur fondation jusqu'au 31 décembre 1911*, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1914.
- Hervier Dominique (ed.), Boulmer Catherine, Duhau Isabelle, *Vers un inventaire du patrimoine de la Seine-Saint-Denis*, Paris: DRAC Île-de-France, 1999.
- Hervier Dominique (ed.), *Trente ans de patrimoine en Île-de-France. Région Île-de-France. Inventaire général des monuments et des richesses artistiques de la France*, Paris: APPIF, 1995.
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Perret-Gentil Yves, *Bibliographie historique des petites villes d'Île-de-France (XVI^e-*

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- Published studies

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Chapter 1

1. Based on SHD, 1VH 2066 (Série 1V), *Plan de Paris indiquant les fortifications et les bâtiments militaires*, 1851 (map), and SDMA, 10Fi1/3, Cadastre de 1854, Section M (detailed view).
2. From the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts et d’Archéologie de Besançon (detail).
3. From *Atlas communal du département de la Seine*, révision 1874 (survey 1869–74), accessed via geoportail93.fr.
4. Based on SDMA, 1Fi12, *Atlas communal du département de la Seine*, Saint-Denis, partie Sud, 1899.
5. Based on SDMA, 2 Fi 15/433-57.
6. Based on SDMA, 2 Fi 3/108, 202 (no date, between 1903 and 1914).
7. Based on SDMA, 2 Fi 3/234.
8. From SDMA, 2 Fi 3/115-192 (detail).
9. From SDMA, 2 Fi 3/20 (detail).
10. Based on “Carte d’état-major du nord de Paris, 1901,” accessed from geoportail93.fr.
11. Based on SDMA, CT 1136, “Plan reçu par le bureau du travail le 20.02.1914.”
12. From SDMA, 2Fi 3/67 (detail).
13. From SDMA, 2 O 238, “Propriété de M. et Mme Barillier à la Plaine.”
14. Based on AD93, D4P4 57, Documents préparatoires à l’établissement du cadastre, bulletins de recensement de propriété, No. 43, 102 Av. de Paris [1880s-1890s].
15. Based respectively on AD77, 214E460, Minutes de Me Fauvel, “Cahier de charges pour parvenir à l’adjudication d’un vaste immeuble sis à la Plaine-Saint-Denis avenue de Paris 96, 98, 100 et 102,” 30.05.1897; AD77, 214E482,

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16. Courtesy of the Verrecchia family (Int. Verrecchia, No. 39, 4.09.2016).
 17. From our own collection.
 18. Drawn by Mr. González's son, Stéphane Gonzalez.
 19. From AVP, D2U8 390, Cour d'assises de la Seine, dossier d'instruction c. Lopez Rufo, arrêt du 4.01.1935.
 20. From AD93, Dommages de guerre, Seconde Guerre mondiale, No. 90, RB43221, LU, Lutel et Coulon.
 21. From our own collection.
 - 22–4, 27–8, 30.
Based on the corresponding censuses for Saint-Denis (SDMA 1F17, 1F19, 1F21, 1F24, 1F27, 1F33; AD93 D2M8 205).
 25. Courtesy of Ms. Besson (Int. Besson, No. 27, 24.07.2016).
 26. Based on the corresponding birth and death registers for Saint-Denis.
 29. Based on the corresponding censuses and other sources to identify precise birthplaces (references at paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "General table 96-102," tab "Life events").
 31. From SDMA, 1S21, Ernest Mesièrre, Album Legras, no date (ca. 1905-1910), "Personnel du décor."
 32. Based on FNA, BB/11/1491, 1462 x 79, Diédatt (resident at No. 98); BB/11/1492, 1540 x 79, Fischer (No. 96); BB/11/1722, 5570 x 83, Bouquet (No. 100); BB/11/1670, 577 x 83, Hepply (No. 96); BB/11/1710, 4521 x 83, Moser (No. 96); BB/11/1981, 2472 x 87, Fixari (No. 100); BB/11/2166, 7779 x 88, Austett (No. 100); BB/11/2155, 6602 x 88, Chevrier (No. 100); BB/11/2186, 9792 x 88, Engelmann (No. 100); BB/11/2475, 9087 x 90, Lentz (No. 96); BB/11/2397, 1265 x 90, Wernert (No. 96); BB/11/2609, 10501 x 91, Lienhardt (No. 100); BB/11/2654, 3500 x 92, Wymann (No. 100); BB/11/2755, 1362 x 93, Bastian (No. 100); BB/11/2462, 7799 x 90, Bricks (No. 100); AD93, 4U7/353, Saisies-arrêts, 21.04.1898, Bellefontaine et autres c. Billioud (No. 100); 7.04.1898, Borel, Roucher c. Pelletier (No. 102); 18.05.1898, Sicard c. Beaurepaire (No. 96); 5.12.1898, Sicard, Bénard et Crosson c. Falquet (No. 100); SDMA, CT151, Secours, 2.03.1910, Joseph Bour (No. 100); SDMA, CT811, Demandes de secours, Lettre du chef du Secrétariat particulier du Préfet de la Seine au maire de Saint-Denis about M. Cheval, 13.09.1899 (No. 100).
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Chapter 2

1. Courtesy of M. and Mme Thomas (Int. Thomas, No. 51, 31.10.2016).
- 2-3. See paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Residents moving in and out."
4. Based on FNA, 19770873/240, 24848 x 31, Émile Louis De Carli; 19770882/126, 5741 x 34, Marcelino Sánchez and Celedonia Ramos; 19770898/138, 50134 x 38, Thomas Greco and Anne Rose Gallaccio; AD78, 1R/RM 223, Military registers, Versailles, 1892, No. 60, Alfred Moret; AD93, D2 M8 91, Saint-Denis, 1926 Census; SDMA, 1F33, Saint-Denis, 1931 Census.
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9. From AD93, 49Fi9223, Postcard, "La Plaine-Saint-Denis – La Verrerie." The AD93 date the postcard to 1910-1920, which would be inconsistent with Luigi's appearance. We have found stamped copies on sale on the internet from dates as early as 1904.

10. Photograph by Ernest Mési re, in SDMA, 1S21, Album d'entreprise, Verreries et cristalleries Legras et Cie, no date, 1900s, 10.
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Chapter 3

- 1-2. See www.paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Spouses and friends."
3. Based on the corresponding censuses for Saint-Denis (SDMA 1F17, 1F19, 1F21, 1F24, 1F27, 1F33; AD93 D2M8 205), supplemented by additional sources for birthplaces (referred to in www.paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "General table 96-102", "Life events").

Chapter 4

1. From SDMA, CT 58, Pr fecture de la Seine, *Instructions aux maires des communes du d partement de la Seine pour les op rations du d nombrement*, 1886.
2. From SDMA, CT 928, "D clarations d' trangers," No. 156.
3. Courtesy of Luc Federmeyer (Int. Federmeyer, No. 47, 23.11.2016).
- 4-5. From AD93, 4U7/995, Parquet du tribunal de la Seine, dossier d'instruction n  49750, 27.08.1901, 5.10.1901, "Faux et usage de faux, contravention   la loi du 2.11.1892," c. Gallaccio et autres.
6. Courtesy of the Verrecchia family (Int. Verrecchia, No. 39, 4.09.2016).
7. Courtesy of Luc Federmeyer (Int. Federmeyer, No. 47, 23.11.2016).
8. From SDMA, CT 405.
- 9-12. See www.paris-tenement.eu, additional data, "Naturalisation files."
13. Courtesy of Christophe Sedano (Int. Sedano, No. 11, 9.04.2016).
14. Photo postcard (detail) Courtesy of Ms. Besson (Int. Besson, No. 27, 24.07.2016).
15. Courtesy of M. and Mme Parravano (Int. Parravano, No. 52, 28.10.2016).
16. Based on a photograph from our own collection.

Epilogue

1. From AD93, Dommages de guerre, Seconde Guerre mondiale, box No. 99, 18E11, Verreries de Saint-Denis.
2. Private collection of St phane Gonzalez.
3. From Google Street View.

Conclusion

1. Our personal collection. Gift from Mme Haussy n e Mandagot.

GLOSSARY

Apache(-s)

A reference to the native American tribe, whose supposed ferociousness had been popularised by French novels in the second half of the 19th century, the term appeared in the national press around 1900 to designate gangs of young bandits in Paris, especially in outlying neighbourhoods and near the fortifications. Its use receded after the First World War.

Bureau de bienfaisance

The expression refers to the local charity institution which municipalities were entitled to set up by virtue of a law adopted during the French Revolution. The Bureaux could hand out food (bread, flour, oil, meat), coal, and cover medical fees (orthopedic prostheses in particular). Financial handouts were rare. Their budget was made up of municipal subsidies, a special tax on balls, theatres, concerts and cinemas (called *droit des pauvres*), and the returns of estates donated to the town.

Certificat de coutume

To this day, this legal document written by a foreign lawyer and translated into French by a certified translator, is delivered by diplomatic missions to be produced before French officials (notaries, mayors, judges). Its function is to certify the existence and interpretation of one particular provision of law in the country of origin of the person presenting the certificate. In the particular context of marriages, the *certificat de coutume* at the beginning of the 20th century was meant to prove that in certain countries, major citizens were not required to prove parental consent to be able to marry.

Conseil de révision

In every *canton* (Saint-Denis was the main town of one such administrative division), this institution created under the French Revolution was the military recruiting board in charge of deciding every year whether conscripts were fit to go and accomplish their service. Based on a variety of legal motives, the *conseil de révision* could grant exemptions, discharges and postings outside of active military duty. Annual sessions of the *conseil de révision* took place in the spring at the city hall of the canton's main town –usually in mid-April in Saint-Denis– and were composed of the *Préfet* (or the *Sous-préfet*), superior military officers and other personalities.

Débit (de boissons)

Dating to the first decades of the 19th century, the term *débit* initially referred to different kinds of retail shops, in particular those selling tobacco (*débit de tabac*) and liquors (*débit de boissons*). By the end of the century, the noun *débit* without further precision came to designate any bar and restaurant serving alcohol. The term long remained more popular than its equivalent *bistrot* (also spelled *bistro*).

Dionysian

Term based on the French name and adjective for inhabitants of Saint-Denis, *Dionysien*, *Dionysienne*. It has nothing to do with its traditional use in English, referring to the Greek god Dionysus.

Employé, employée

In census registers of the late 19th and early 20th century, this French term designated people employed in white-collar jobs (clerks, secretary, typists), and who often enjoyed permanent contracts, as opposed to *journaliers*, blue-collar workers paid on a daily basis.

Feuille d'immatriculation

In 1893, the possession of this certificate, legally called “*extrait du registre d'immatriculation*,” became compulsory for foreigners who intended to work or run a business (law of 8.08.1893). They received it upon compliance with the requirement to register within eight days of their arrival in a new town. Failure to register could result in fines ranging from 50 to 200 francs, and employers who hired non-registered foreigners were also liable to financial sanctions.

Garni

The adjective *garni*, which in the context of housing meant “furnished” – the equivalent of today’s *meublé*– became a noun in the 19th century and came designate a room rented with furnitures, either in a hotel or in a private apartment. People who wished to run a garni in the Seine had to file a declaration at the Préfecture de police, and were subject to a number of occupancy and hygiene requirements.

Journalier, journalière

At the glassworks as elsewhere in the Plaine, most positions until the 1930s were based on daily employment. From a legal standpoint, job contracts were regarded as being renewed every day (hence the term “*journalier*”), but the custom of each industrial sector usually mandated short periods of notice before any termination of the contract by one of the parties. Workers were paid every other Friday based on the number of days they had worked in the two-week period. After the Great War, an informal practice took hold at the glass factory and in other factories in the Plaine, consisting in giving workers daily advances on their salaries.

Justice de paix

Present in every *canton* (Saint-Denis was the main town of one such administrative division), the *Justice de paix* was until 1958 the local court in

charge of minor civil lawsuits and execution procedures (such as seizures of salaries and assets after the inexecution of a previous ruling). Free of charge for plaintiffs, it generally encouraged settlement through conciliation before setting a hearing before a judge. In Saint-Denis, the building of the *Justice de paix* also hosted a criminal court, the *Tribunal de simple police*, which was in charge of minor offenses and could only sentence people to fines (the equivalent of magistrate's courts).

Lit-cage

Folding bed made of metal, invented in the late 1880s.

Livret de travail

A first version of that document (lit. “work booklet”) was created in 1803 to control the movements of adult workers and were compulsory until 1890 (see the reference on figure 2, chapter 4). The factory management had custody of the *livret* and the worker could not leave without it, which also had to be signed by the local authorities and indicate the town of destination. Laws on child work (19.05.1874, Art. 10; 2.11.1892, Art. 10) prescribed the establishment of a different sort of *livret*, this time for every worker under the age of 18 (see chapter 4, figure 5). Bearing the name, date of birth and hiring dates of its holder, the children's *livret* was not so much an instrument of mobility control as an identity document, created for the purpose of enforcing the legal requirement on the minimum age.

Locataire principal

The expression (lit. “main tenant”) designated tenants who signed a rental agreement for an entire property divisible into smaller units, and on which subleasing was not prohibited. Towards his or her subtenants, the *locataire principal* had exactly the same obligations as a regular landlord. He or she also

remained responsible for all damages to the property (Civil code, Art. 1735).

Padrone (-i), padrón (-es)

In the late 19th century, the Italian words *padrone* and *incettatore (di fanciulli)* referred to intermediaries who were entrusted children in Italy to make them work first as street peddlers, and later as factory workers. The feminine *padrona* was used for *padroni*'s wives and also independent female child-suppliers. Castilian-speakers used the equivalents *padrón*, *padrones*. The French press would sometimes use the word *comprachico*, coined by Victor Hugo in *L'Homme qui rit*.¹

Terra di Lavoro

Literally meaning “*Land of Labour*” in Italian, *Terra di Lavoro* was the name of a historical province of the Kingdom of Two Sicilies and then of Italy after unification. Its northernmost subdivision (*circondario*) corresponded to the area around Sora and Arpino, which bordered Molise (administrative centre, Campobasso) to the west. The administrative centre of *Terra di Lavoro* was Caserta. The province was abolished in 1927.

Tirage au sort

Literally meaning “the draw” or the “lottery,” the *tirage au sort* happened in every *canton* in winter, in order to establish the list of conscripts who would then be subject to the final decisions of the *conseil de révision*. Initially meant to divide annual levies into two groups –one that had to serve and the other that did not– the distinction between “good” and “bad numbers” became limited to the duration of service after 1873 (one or five years). From 1889 to 1905, everyone had to serve for three years, and the draw only determined whether the conscripts would be enrolled in the Navy or the Army. The draw was abolished in 1905.

¹ Victor Hugo, *Œuvres complètes*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1880-1926, Vol. 13, 152.